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THE HASHEMITE CONNECTION: CURRENT ISSUES IN
JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN RELATIONS

By

RALPH H. MAGNUS

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This report first examines the basic orientations of the Hashemite dynasty and Kingdom towards Palestine and the Palestinian people in the light of pan-Arab, Israeli and international dimensions of the issue. The major policies since the 1967 loss of the West Bank are examined to demonstrate the application of these orientations to policy decisions. The three major policy decisions of the 1980s; the agreement of King Husayn and Yasir Arafat of 1985, the suspension of the agreement in 1986 and the disengagement decision of 1988 are examined in detail. The current state of Jordanian-Palestinian relations since the intifadah is examined for the relevant segments of the Palestinian people for Jordan: those of the PLO, the occupied territories and the Jordanians of Palestinian origin in the Hashemite Kingdom. The new relationship might enhance the stability of a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, even if it removes Jordan as the key player in attaining such a settlement.

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JORDANIAN ORIENTATIONS

A. Introduction.

Through a series of critical turning points as viewed through the eyes of leading Jordanian decision makers, first and foremost by King Husayn himself, Jordan has developed a set of fundamental orientations toward the actors involved in the Palestine question and the relationship between the Hashemite kingdom and the Palestinians. The examination of these orientations--a kind of natural filter through which our facts are integrated into established patterns of cognition--is a particularly fruitful method for the study of the continuity of complex foreign policy issues, as demonstrated in Michael Brecher's study of Israeli foreign policy.¹

There is every reason to assume that this approach will prove to be particularly valuable for the study of Jordanian-Palestinian relations. First, there is the factor of congruence in the fact that the modern dimensions of the issue developed simultaneously with the establishment of Hashemite rule in the Arab world in the course of World War I and the political realization of the Zionist idea in the Balfour Declaration and the Palestine mandate. This factor is strongly reinforced by the dynastic and personal dimensions of the Hashemite family. King Husayn has ruled for over half of the modern Hashemite political

1. Michael Brecher, The Foreign Policy System of Israel (London, Oxford University Press, 1972), see especially Chapter 11, pp. 229-250.

era--an era beginning with his great-grandfather's proclamation of the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire in 1916. In virtually every formal speech of King Husayn on the subject of Palestine, and in most of his shorter remarks and interviews, there are extensive references to this family heritage and history. Clearly, such references are considered by the monarch, and rightly so, to enhance the legitimacy of his current policies. They are even more valuable in aiding our understanding of the thought processes through which these policies were decided. Finally, there is the powerful factor of regime type. There are, to be sure, continuities to be found in the foreign policy orientations of any established regime due to ideological factors, elite education and experience and the very process of dealing with recurring geopolitical realities. But to a monarch approaching the fifth decade of his reign, the political crises of the past are not merely dry chapters of history books. Rather, they are the vivid memories of his grandfather assassinated before his eyes, of his broken army streaming across the Jordan river bridges in defeat with only six of its one hundred eighty-six tanks, or his capital virtually taken over by thousands of Palestinian guerrillas calling for his removal.

These considerations lead to the examination of foreign policy decision making and, particularly, of Palestinian policy. Aside from its excellence as a study of a crucial turning point of Jordanian history, Jordan in the 1967 War by Samir A. Mutawi

presents the most detailed available account of this process.² Although some differences are noted from the early years of King Husayn's reign, clearly the model is one of a traditional Arab patriarchal regime. This model is reinforced by the extent to which Jordan's very survival has been dependent on relations with other nations and by the monarch's long reign--making him the senior statesman of the Arab world. Former prime minister Zaid Rifai explained this system as ... "a highly personalized system of government in which decisions are made by the King, through the influence of the King's advisers and in some cases by the prime ministers and his cabinet. It is not an institutionalized process. It is a fact of life in Jordan that we do not have an institutionalized process of decision-making."³ Beyond the person of the monarch, however, there is a ruling elite of the King's trusted aides and friends including the Crown Prince, Hasan ibn Talal, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, the Royal Hashemite Diwan and the army. This ruling elite has the ability to modify decisions through control of information, its advisory role and its influence through the choice of a particular method of implementation. It would be a mistake, however, to look at this as a completely closed totalitarian system. The essence of a traditional patriarchal system in the Arab world rests in the process of consultation. Thus, even though parliamentary institutions, elections, political parties and a free press have

2. Samir A. Mutawi, Jordan in the 1967 War (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), Chapter 1, pp. 1-18.

3. Ibid. p. 7.

enjoyed only sporadic effectiveness in Jordan's history, Mutawi concludes: "The ideology of popular participation in Jordan cannot be ignored.... Popular sentiment expressed through parliament and public disturbances played a significant role in influencing the decision that Jordan should participate in the 1967 war."⁴ This "popular" element in Jordan's Palestine policy is the most difficult aspect to evaluate in the absence of formal institutions and the constant of the presence of the efficient security service, but it is not to be neglected. It is part of the basic self-definition of both Jordanians and Palestinians. In the past year, following the renunciation of responsibility for the West Bank and rioting in southern Jordan over economic austerity and governmental corruptions, King Husayn responded by dismissing Prime Minister Rifai and holding the November 1989 parliamentary elections. Clearly, such moves indicate a fundamental reorganization of the political system, including the drafting of a "National Charter." Popular attitudes demanding more formalized participation, stifled through a three decade ban on political parties and a two decade period of martial law, have begun to influence a period of almost revolutionary change in Jordan.

B. The Pan Arab Dimension.

"How many in the young generation of Palestinians or Arabs know that the Palestinian body politic under the mandate was divided on the future of Palestine into two main groups, one

4. Ibid., p. 18.

looking for union with Jordan out of loyalty to the principles of the great Arab Revolt consecrating union which was a living force in their hearts, and another looking for independence within a Palestinians state? How many are aware that the decision of the Palestinian people to unite with Jordan was a victory for the idea of Arab unity prevalent at that time?... How many of the young generation realize that national identity and not state identity was the prevalent notion in the forties and fifties and that it constituted the essence of prevalent Arab political thought then?.... The period of union between the two banks preceding June 1967 was a living model of a larger union to which all Arabs aspired at that time."⁵

The primary attitude shaping the Jordanian view of the Palestine issue is that of pan-Arabism, as revealed most vividly in this quotation from the address of King Husayn to the extraordinary Arab summit in Algiers in June 1988. There are two related but distinct aspects to consider in this attitude. The first is the historical role of the Hashemites in this century, including their involvement in Palestinian politics, stemming from their claims to the leadership of a broad pan-Arab, nationalist movement aiming the independence and unity of the Arab world as a whole.

5. "Husayn Addresses Summit," as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report, Middle East and Africa, 9 June 1988, p. 8. (Hereafter this publication will be referred to as FBIS).

The office of Sharif of Mecca, to which Sharif Husayn ibn Ali was appointed by the Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Hamid II in 1908, was a traditional and religious position. It recognized the special status of the Holy Cities and the province of the Hejaz in the world of Islam. It was traditional in the Ottoman empire for the sultan to appoint a sharif, or noble, of the Prophet's clan, the Banu Hashim, to administer the province jointly with an Ottoman governor--since God himself had chosen this clan to produce His greatest Prophet. This high status was indicated in the tradition of the Prophet: "Allah chose Isma'il from the sons of Ibrahim and from the sons of Isma'il the Banu Kinana and from the Banu Kinana the Kuraish and from the Kuraish the Banu Hashim."⁶

Soon after his appointment, however, changes within the Ottoman Empire brought about by the "Young Turk" revolution of 1908, including the deposition of Sultan Abdul-Hamid II and the increased Turkish nationalism of the regime, led Sharif Husayn to reevaluate his relationship to Constantinople--now dominated by the Committee of Union and Progress. With the outbreak of World War I, this reevaluation resulted in his decision to break with the traditional allegiance to the Sultan and form an alliance with the newly emerging forces of Arab nationalism. One of his sons, Faysal, was sent to Damascus to consolidate ties to the Arab nationalist society, al-Fatat. Correspondence was also initiated by Sharif Husayn with the British High Commissioner in -----

6. "Sharif," in H.A.R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, eds., The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam (Mouten, The Hague, 1974), p. 529.

Egypt. Sir Henry McMahon on July 15, 1915, to learn of the support he could expect on behalf of the Arabs for rebelling against the Ottoman Empire.

A compelling explanation of Sharif Husayn's attitudes is suggested by Mary C. Wilson in her recent history, King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan. Although not lacking in personal ambition to consolidate his family rule in the Hejaz. The Sharif of Mecca needed a more impressive justification for breaking with the largest Islamic state and allying himself with the largest Christian empire.

"He also needed a justification, a large sweeping historic cause where moral imperative would be able to drown out criticism. An Arab, of the line of the Prophet, he found such an identity and such a cause in the nascent ideology of Arab nationalism. This movement, born and nurtured in Damascus, Beirut and Cairo, provided both the legitimacy of purpose and a large framework of endeavor to justify and ennoble Husayn's dynastic ambitions."⁷

Abdullah, however, never relinquished his own ambitions for a larger role in the Arab world. Initially, his ambitions centered on the Arabian peninsula itself, but his disastrous defeat at the hands of the Saudi ikhwan in 1919 forced him to look northward. Next, he hoped to gain Iraq after twenty-one Iraqi delegates to the General Syrian Congress of March 1920 in Damas-

7. Mary C. Wilson, King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 26.

cus proclaimed him to be king of Iraq (the Syrian delegates had selected his younger brother, Emir Faysal, to be king of Syria).⁸

When Faysal was driven from Syria by the French in July 1920, Abdullah responded to the appeal from Arab nationalists in Amman and set off with a military force from the Hejaz. The territory which eventually became Transjordan had been allotted to the British Palestine mandate by the San Remo Conference in 1920, but had actually been administered since the end of the war by Faysal's Arab government from Damascus. The settlement imposed by the British as a result of the Cairo Conference of 1921 was to placate Arab nationalism and fulfill their wartime commitments to the Hashemites through the establishment of an Iraqi kingdom under Faysal and an Emirate of Transjordan under Abdullah (both under League of Nations mandates).⁹ They had already recognized Husayn as King of the Hejaz. Winston Churchill, the British Colonial Secretary who had convened the Cairo Conference, went to Jerusalem in order to explain the decisions reached at Cairo. There Abdullah suggested either the unity of Transjordan and Palestine or of Transjordan and Iraq under an Arab ruler. Churchill countered by offering him Transjordan alone for six months and a subsidy of 5,000 pounds, provided that he check anti-French and anti-Zionist activity. Should he be successful, this might lead to a change of heart with the French agreeing to -----

8. George Lenczowski, The Middle East in World Affairs, 4th ed. (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 96

9. Aaron S. Klieman, Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World, The Cairo Conference of 1921 (Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970; See also Wilson, op. cit., pp. 39-59.

his installation as Emir in Damascus--which Britain would support but could not guarantee. "For Abdullah, Transjordan was but the threshold to greater power. He expected, at first, to move on to Damascus. In later years he hoped to unite Transjordan with any willing neighbor."¹⁰

Although Palestine was not the primary focus of these ambitions, which centered on Syria but included Iraq and even a return to the Hejaz (from which the Hashemites had been ousted by the Saudis in 1925), neither was Palestine excluded. When the British Royal Commission (the Peel Commission) issued its report in 1937 during the Arab Palestinian's uprising against Zionist immigration, calling for a partition of Palestine with the Arab portion to be incorporated into Transjordan, Abdullah, not surprisingly, endorsed the idea. Some of his partisans in Palestine, however, were forced to flee for their lives and even his major supporters, the al-Nashashibi clan, publicly disassociated themselves from this policy. There was a revival of "Greater Syria" agitation during World War II, but Abdullah found he faced opposition not only from his Arab opponents but from his own family, the Iraqi Hashemites. Prime Minister Nuri Pasha as-Said, who had been the chief of staff of the Arab Army during the Great Arab Revolt, put forward his own plan of Arab unity in the "Fertile Crescent," uniting Iraq and Syria. Eventually, the end result of all these plans was the creation of the League of Arab States in 1945. Although propaganda spoke of this as a step

10. Wilson, op. cit., p. 53.

towards Arab unity, in fact it was founded on the principle of the association of sovereign independent states.

In the end, of course, Abdullah's pan-Arab visions came to be fulfilled to a limited though significant extent as a result of the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. Negotiations with the British, Americans, the United Nations (and even the Zionists directly) failed to come up with a peaceful means to implement the United Nations Partition Resolution, No. 181, of November 1947. Two days before the end of the mandate in May 1948, the Arab League invested Abdullah with the title of supreme commander of the Arab forces, but it was a title without authority. Each Arab army fought on their own (although there was some coordination between the two Hashemite armies of Jordan and Iraq). The war ended with the Transjordanian Arab Legion the only effective Arab force left in Palestine. Politically, the "all-Palestine" government of the mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husayni, the leading Palestinian nationalist of the inter-war years and bitter foe of the Hashemites, was recognized by the Arab League but it was clearly a client of Egypt.

More for the lack of any reasonable alternative than in any great enthusiasm, the Palestinians under Jordanian administration came to accept the necessity of the union with Transjordan. In the elections of April 1950, even the anti-Abdullah elements decided to participate and at least five of the twenty deputies elected from the West Bank could not be described as pro-Abdullah. The motion to unify the West Bank and Transjordan was passed unanimously on April 25, 1950.

The Arab League pressured Abdullah to state that this union was only temporary, but they did not expel Jordan when he failed to do so. The core of the Arab states' opposition to the union of the two banks under Abdullah was that it would lead to the disappearance of the Palestine issue, people and the very name of Palestine from the map of the Middle East. This violated the basic tenants of Arab nationalism--to which all governments, in some degree, based their own legitimacy. Additionally, it acknowledge their bitter and totally unexpected defeat at the hands of the despised Zionists.

"The majority Arab position thus left Palestinian rights intact, at least in theory, implying a continuing struggle with Israel, diplomatically and economically if not militarily, until Israel should in some way recognize those rights. It was just those rights, however, that Abdullah was apt to concede, for his ambitions required the disappearance of Palestine as surely as did Zionist aims."¹¹

Although Abdullah was assassinated on the steps of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem on July 20, 1951, his achievement of the union of the two banks of the Jordan continued for another sixteen years both de facto and de jure. For another twenty-one years, it remained de jure until it was severed in July 1988 by the hand of his grandson, who had been at his side at his death. Gradually but ungraciously, the Arab states recognized the utility of Jordan's leading role in the Palestine issue... "for Jordan saved than either from having to champion the Palestinian cause

11. Ibid., p. 198.

directly or having absolutely to admit their inability to do so."¹²

Nevertheless, the Arab dimension of Jordan's Palestine policy continued to evolve through three distinct phases from 1951 to 1982. In the first phase until 1967 and to some extent into 1970 Jordan was forced to conform, at least in public, to the pan-Arab consensus. This was the era coinciding with the domination of Arab politics by the charismatic figure of Gamel Abdel Nasser and with the youthful and untested leadership of King Husayn. For some years, however, the primary focus of what came to be known as "radical Arab nationalism" or even "Nasserism" downplayed the issue of Palestine. Instead it focused on anti-western imperialism (British, French and, later, American), on political and social revolution to overthrow traditional conservative Arab regimes, and on the achievement of Arab unity once these objectives were attained. The theory was that the Arabs would be united, reformed and ready to challenge Zionism in Palestine. The focus on those issues was cold comfort to the Hashemite monarch, indeed, for Jordan was a prime example of everything the ideology of radical Arab nationalism was fighting to remove. Husayn managed to survive through a combination of compromise and conformity mixed with firmness and courage - - along with a large element of luck. Thus, he gave up on his policy of joining the Baghdad Pact, dismissed Glubb Pasha from command of the Arab Legion and accepted an Arab subsidy to re-

12. Ibid., p. 214.

place his lost British financing. Simultaneously, however, he faced down pro-Nasser military coups, dismissed his radical Arab nationalist prime minister. Sulayman Nabulsi, and welcomed British troops back in 1958 when threaten by the overthrow of his Iraqi Hashemite cousins.

The establishment of several Arab revolutionary states in this period led, in fact, to greater flexibility in Arab relations. If there was no Arab consensus, or merely a rhetorical one, Husayn was free to maneuver. True, the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a result of the first Arab summit in 1964 was an ominous portent for Jordan, but its immediate impact was minimal for it was largely an instrument of Nasser's policy and Nasser had no intention of risking a direct confrontation with Israel. Thus, Husayn was able to close down its offices with impunity when it challenged his authority by claiming to represent the Palestinian citizens of Jordan. Eventually, however, Husayn's (and Nasser's) luck ran out.

In 1967 the escalating rivalry between the radical Ba'th regime in Syria and Nasser led to a general Arab consensus to confront Israel militarily, with the expectation that a short, inconclusive war would benefit the Arabs politically even if they "lost" on the battlefield (as had been the case in the Suez War of 1956). There was also the hope, perhaps even the expectation, that if the Arabs were unified on an Eastern front as well as in the Sinai and prepared for war instead of being attacked by surprise as in 1956, they could win a military victory. In any case, Husayn felt he could not stay on the sidelines. Domestically, Israeli border raids aroused public opinion, especially on

the West Bank, while an Arab consensus made it impossible to remain uncommitted. The King personally took the step of placing his army under Egyptian command with disastrous consequences as the Egyptian general (misled by his own government's mythical victories) altered Jordan's established defensive strategy. As a result, the war was short but hardly indecisive. Jordan lost all of the territory it had saved for the Arabs in 1948. Syria's defeat and loss of territory in the Golan discredited the radical Ba'th regime, contributing to its overthrow by Hafez al-Assad in 1970. Nasser never regained the charismatic leadership role he had played so dramatically before, while the traditional oil states of the Arabian peninsula under the astute leadership of King Faysal of Saudi Arabia gained more influence following the ending of Egypt's military adventure in Yemen and their subsidizing of the shattered economics of the "front line" states, including both Egypt and Jordan.

The challenges facing Husayn stemmed from the economic and political crisis caused by the loss of the West Bank. The defeat of the Arab states finally discredited the Palestinian myth that they would be saved by their Arab brethren. The PLO, established as a front organization of the Arab states in order to disguise their own inadequacies in rhetoric and bureaucracy, now became a genuine revolutionary organization with leadership passing to the guerrilla fedayeen organizations. Although these organizations had different policies towards the Jordanian regime, none could accept limitations on their freedom of action versus Israel and some openly called for the overthrow of the Hashemites and the

establishment of a Palestinian state in Jordan as a necessary preliminary to the regaining of Palestine itself. In his shaky domestic position Husayn made every effort to compromise with the PLO. While some Arab states, in particular the radical Ba'th regime of Syria, encouraged the anti-Hashemite activities of the fedayeen, on the whole the Arab consensus was a source of support for Jordan. The rhetoric of the post-1967 war Arab Summit at Khartoum was suitably radical but the support for the drafting of the Security Council Resolutions 242 demonstrated real support for a political solution. Nasser, more than anyone, realized that Husayn's moderate and favorable image in the West was precisely the image the Arab states, including Egypt, needed to project if they were to have any hope of regaining their lost lands. Thus, in his study of Nasser's Arab politics, Malcolm Kerr characterizes the 1967-1970 period as that of "The Nasir-Husayn Axis."¹³

Finally, in September 1970, the open challenge of the Palestinian fedayeen, as demonstrated in the hijacking of three western airlines to a disused Jordanian airfield, could no longer be tolerated. Husayn's own army demanded action and was on the verge of mutiny. A series of Arab conferences, interventions and truces followed, in the course of which Nasser died of a heart attack, but nothing changed the reality that the military forces of the PLO fedayeen, along with a good many innocent civilians in the refugee camps, were killed and the PLO was eventually driven -----

13. Malcolm H. Kerr, The Arab Cold War, Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970, 3rd Ed. (London, Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 129.

out of Jordan. The Arab states deplored this, but only Syria sought to intervene militarily and their forces were defeated by the Jordanian army and air force. It turned out that the government overthrown was not in Amman, but in Damascus. Faced with the choice of deferring to a pan-Arab consensus and survival, the Hashemite regime had chosen survival. And faced with a choice between the PLO and King Husayn, Nasser had chosen the Hashemite monarch. "The supreme irony of Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir's career was that he died in the act of shielding his old enemy Husayn, at the expense of his old clients the Palestinians."¹⁴

Emboldened by this success, Husayn set out in 1972 to shape an Arab consensus on the Palestine issue by himself. His "United Arab Kingdom" proposed a union of the two banks with separate Palestinian and Jordanian governments with an overall central government controlling security and foreign affairs. Of course, this ignored the wishes of the PLO--now rebuilding its organizations in Beirut. Nothing came of this although major features continue to surface in various peace plans down to today. The Arab consensus instead moved once again in 1973, given the lack of any flexibility on the part of Israel and the disinterest of the international community, to the option of a more carefully prepared military and economic action aimed at demonstrating to both Israel and the West that Israel could not sit forever on her conquests. Jordan went along with this consensus, but in view of its weakness and his own caution following the results of unques-

14. Ibid., p. 153.

tioning support of the Arab effort in 1967, Husayn's military action was confined to the belated dispatch of a force to fight alongside the Syrians on the Golan. Husayn hoped to be included in the territorial adjustments which had led to new armistice lines between Israel and Syria and Israel and Egypt. The United States was drawing up plans for this in 1974, but these were abandoned as was the international peace conference at Geneva.

Instead, in a very significant move, the Arab summit at Rabat in 1974 adopted a crucial resolution recognizing the PLO as "the sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people. Jordan fought against this resolution with all its strength. It pointed out that it would greatly complicate or make impossible the implementation of UN 242, which was the accepted international basis for a settlement. Finally, Jordan was forced to accept this resolution, which at least had some effect in moderating the position of the PLO mainstream. This mainstream, led by Arafat, accepted the interim goal of the establishment of a Palestinian state on any territory of Palestine that might be recovered from Israel. By implication this meant the acceptance, at least temporarily, of a two-state solution sharing Palestine with Israel. For some PLO groups this was too much to accept. They broke with Arafat and Abu Nidal's "Fatah Revolutionary Council" unleashed a terrorist campaign primarily aimed at the moderate PLO leadership.

In the mid 1970's Jordan, in effect, withdrew from the active role it had taken in shaping the Arab consensus since 1967. This phase lasted until after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Husayn felt that any real hope for negotiations

had been killed through a combination of the indifference of the international community. Israeli intransigence and by the Arabs' own actions in giving a veto power to the PLO by their investing them with the legitimacy of being "the sole legitimate representative."

A new and most revealing test of Husayn's fundamental attitudes toward the Arab factor of his Palestinian policy came as a result of the Camp David negotiations of 1978. Even though the "Framework of Peace in the Middle East" agreed to between Sadat and Begin on September 17, 1978 provided for a key Jordanian role in the West Bank and Gaza, a "self governing authority" for a five year transition period, and the recognition of "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements," Jordan refused to participate in the negotiations envisioned and later actually conducted between Egypt and Israel.¹⁵ In King Husayn's view..."they were not committed to a comprehensive settlement...they dealt with the Palestinian aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of establishing autonomy for the Palestinians that does not give them their natural legitimate right of sovereignty on their own soil."¹⁶ Instead, Jordan endorsed the actions of the Baghdad Arab Summit to condemn Egypt for its "deviation from the Arab ranks" by severing diplomatic relations and suspending Egypt's Arab League membership.

15. "Camp David Framework for Peace," Quoted in Walter Z. Laqueur and Barry Rubin, eds. The Arab-Israeli Reader, 4th ed., revised (New York, Penguin Books, 1984), pp. 611-12.

16. "Husayn Addresses Summit," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, text, as reported in FBIS (9 June 1988), p. 9.

Despite the fact of a settlement between the most important Arab state and Israel, the promised withdrawal of Israeli forces on the West Bank, Jordan's proposed role in shaping a final settlement along with elected Palestinians, the active role of the United States at the highest level and Jordan's strained relationship with the PLO, Jordan was unwilling to be even the second Arab state to break ranks on the Palestine question. Of course, the Baghdad Summit did provide a cash bonus in the form of substantial subsidies from the oil states to the "front-line" states, as well as the PLO, but every indication is that Jordan would have refused to go along with the proposed Camp David framework even without such inducements.

The overall record of Jordan's views on Par-Arabism thus reveals three fundamental positions:

1. There is a genuine ideological commitment based upon historic role of the Hashemites as the leaders of "The Great Arab Revolt." Jordan has the right and duty to attempt to influence the formulation of a pan-Arab position or even to pursue an independent policy in the absence of an agreed upon Arab position. Jordan's long and intimate experience with this question, as well as its dangerously exposed position facing potential Israeli aggression, should give its views a special weight in the establishment of a pan-Arab consensus.

2. In matters involving internal security Jordan will take whatever actions it deems necessary, even if those go against the prevailing Arab consensus.

3. Jordan will not disregard an established Arab consensus however much it disagreed with its formulations (as in the Rabat 1974 decision on the PLO) or however enticing are the promised rewards (as in the Camp David framework).

Would Jordan ever violate these principles? In a particularly revealing interview in February 1988 King Husayn himself admitted that he would:

"I will tell you a little secret. I challenged the United States repeatedly after 1967 by saying: If you can guarantee that I will recover all my lost territory, including East Jerusalem, I will be ready to go with you in any direction that will lead to that goal. However, I know that the United States can never promise me that. Under no circumstances will I march in a direction that will only complicate efforts to solve the entire problem."¹⁷

Thus, he would hypothetically, but the hypothetical preconditions for such an action would, in fact, be impossible to attain.

C. The Israeli Dimension..

"It has been my destiny to experience the various phases of the Palestine tragedy, as well as the results of the implementation of Zionist plans drawn up by forces which know what they want and carry out what they have planned, stage by stage. I have not seen or observed any emergence of the long-awaited Arab plan which would be capable of defending

17. "King Husayn Comments on Uprising, Peace Process," interview in Der Spiegel of 1 February 1988, as reported in FBIS (3 Feb 1988), p. 30.

the just cause of a brotherly and dear people who surely deserve better than their continued plight currently holds for them."¹⁸

King Husayn's fundamental dilemma versus Israel is succinctly expressed in this quotation from the speech announcing his suspension of coordination with the PLO in an effort to enter into peace negotiations under the auspices of an international conference. Israel is viewed as a mortal danger to both Palestine, first and foremost, but to Jordan and the Hashemites as well. There is a strong belief that, had the positions advocated by his grandfather and himself been accepted when they were advanced, the position of the Palestines would be much better off now than is their actual plight. Thus, he did not hesitate to defend Abdullah's position calling for the acceptance of the 1947 United Nations Palestine Resolution:

"The late King Abdullah ibn al-Husayn sacrificed his life in his sincere effort to save the biggest part of Palestine. Through his sharp discernment, he knew the significance of the historical phase through which our nation was passing and the dimensions of the international plot against Palestine."¹⁹

King Husayn is correct in pointing out the long and direct experience of his family with Zionism. In January 1918, only two

18. "Hussein's February 19 Speech on the Peace Process," Official Jordanian Translation, Message from AMEMBASSY, AMMAN to SECSTATE, WASH, D.C. 2114, Sect. 27 of 28, 19 Feb 1986.

19. "King Husayn Address," Amman Domestic Service, 22 November 1984, as reported in FBIS, 26 November 1984, p. A-14.

months after the announcement of the Balfour Declaration, D. G. Hogarth, head of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, paid an official visit to Sharif Husayn in Jidda in order to explain the declaration. His explanation was that, "Jewish settlement in Palestine would be allowed in so far as would be consistent with the political and economic freedom of the Arab population."²⁰ This explanation was confirmed when a Zionist delegation, headed by Dr. Weizmann himself, stopped in Cairo on its way to Palestine in March of that year. In June, Dr. Weizmann visited Emir Faysal's camp near Aqaba where he reaffirmed that the Zionists had no intention of working for the establishment of the Jewish government. Finally, in January 1919, under strong British pressure and in hopes of their fulfillment of pledges made promising Arab independence, Emir Faysal signed an agreement with Dr. Weizmann in London to work, "through the closest possible collaboration in the development of the Arab State and Palestine."²¹ Although this agreement, which was not authorized by King Husayn, clearly acknowledge two entities--an Arab State and Palestine--calling for the determination of "definite boundaries" between them, its declared aim was the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. The Hashemites had no quarrel with the official explanation of this declaration as conveyed to them by both the British government and the

20. George Antonius, The Arab Awakening (Beirut: Khayat's, 1955), p. 268.

21. The text of the agreement is given in Ibid., Appendix "F," pp. 437-39.

Zionist officials. Faysal, however, took the additional precaution of adding a postscript in his own hand:

"Provided the Arabs obtain their independence as demanded in my memorandum dated 4th of January 1919, to the Foreign Office of the Government of Great Britain, I shall concur in the above articles. But if the slightest modification or departure were to be made (in relation to the demands in the Memorandum) I shall not then be bound by a single word of the present agreement which shall be deemed void and if no account of validity, and I shall not be answerable in any way whatsoever."²²

In the end, of course, Faysal's fears instead of his hopes proved to be correct. The British still continued to hope for the endorsement of King Husayn of their Middle Eastern policies, especially as they related to Palestine. Even though they made the signing of an alliance and the continuation of their subsidy, both vital for the defense of the Hejaz against the Saudis, conditional on King Husayn's endorsement their Palestine mandate, he refused to do so and was driven from the Hejaz in 1925. His great-grandson referred to this in his address to the 17th Palestine National Council: "Al-Sharif Husayn, and rest his soul in peace, sacrificed his throne in defense of Palestine's Arabism when he refused to sign the treaty with Britain unless it provided for the cancellation of the Balfour Declaration."²³ What King Husayn forgets to mention, however, is the fact that this refusal

22. Ibid.

23. "King Husayn Address," loc. cit.

was against the advice of Emir Abdullah, who had, in fact, negotiated a treaty for his father with Colonel T. E. Lawrence in 1921.²⁴ Clearly, Abdullah was aware that the Zionists and an important element of the British government wished to include the Trans-Jordanian portions of the Palestine mandate into the Palestine Mandate administration, and thus in the implementation of the Balfour Declaration. This was strongly advocated by Sir Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner of Palestine.²⁵

From the direct experience of his family, thus, Husayn reaches his assessment of Israel goals, which have, in his view, dual motives:

"To occupy the land of Palestine and expand the territory of Israel. ...Expanding Israeli territory, through occupation of Arab lands, would fulfill one of Zionism's cherished aims while at the same time achieving from their point of view a security need arising more from psychological considerations than from those of space, distance and topography."²⁶

The psychological dimension arises from the fact that Israel was planted on expropriated Arab lands, making its acceptance and co-existence with the larger Arab body a large problem, a problem which it attempted to solve by force..."embarking on a vicious circle: the more force it used to impose itself, the greater Arab qualms and rejection, which in turn served to fuel Israel's fears

24. Wilson, op. cit., p. 88.

25. Ibid., p. 45.

26. "Husayn's Feb 19 Speech on the Peace Process," op. cit., Sec. 03.

growing from an awareness of the resentment of its imposed creation in the midst of a vast sea of Arabs, and, consequently, to trigger greater security concerns." Thus, although the neighboring Arab countries accepted Israel's existence though UN Resolutions 242 and 338 in 1967 and 1973:

"Israel resorted to procrastination in order to gain time to create new facts in the occupied territories as a prelude to annexing them... In order to impose its will by force, Israel continues to hold on to the concept of security based on territorial expansion and military strength."²⁷

This negative assessment must be balanced against the fact that, given the choice between the loss of his throne and asking for Israeli military support in response to Syrian armed intervention in support of the PLO in September 1970, King Husayn was willing to appeal in the last resort, through the U.S., for Israeli military support. Even in this case, he was suspicious that Israel would take advantage of the crises to launch a ground attack designed to capture Jordanian territory.²⁸ Thus, he preferred American air support over Israeli and Israeli ground actions on Syrian soil versus intervention in Jordan. In the end, neither American nor Israeli military support was necessary although their well publicized preparations might have induced

27. "Husayn's Feb. 19 Speech on the Peace Process," op. cit., Sec 03.

28. Donald Neff, "Origin of US-Israeli Strategic Cooperation," American-Arab Affairs, No. 21 (Summer 1987), p. 80; see also William B. Quandt, Decade of Decisions (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), Chapter IV.

caution in Syria and certainly emboldened the Jordanians. In fact, the Syrian armored attack was doomed once the Syrian Air Force refused to provide it cover due to the internal struggle between the air force commander, Hafez al-Assad, and other elements of the Baath Party loyal to Salih Jedid. The intermediary role of the United States simultaneously served to guarantee that an Israeli intervention would not be turned into an attack on Jordan as well.

Israel's goal is to perpetrate its occupation with the aim of gradually expropriating and absorbing the territory. Its next goal is to separate the Palestinian people from the land. There are, according to King Husayn, three options available to the Israeli leadership to accomplish this:

1. "The first argues for the annexation of the greater and less densely populated part of occupied Palestinian territory, and a return to Jordan of the remaining and more densely populated segment. It is referred to as the Jordanian option, which we have rejected."
2. "The second option calls for annexing the entire territories and granting autonomy to the Palestinian inhabitants without sovereignty over their land, on the grounds that they are a large foreign community living in Israeli territory. This is an attempt to separate the Palestinians from their land as a prelude to their eviction when conditions permit. The Palestinians have rejected this option, and so have we."
3. "The third option demands the annexation of territory and the eviction of the inhabitants east through mili-

tary force. This prospect, however, does not lend itself to mere rejection but requires much preparation on our part to ensure that it does not happen."²⁹

In examining all three of these options in a later speech, the King pointed out that, "Israel... draws up its expansionist policy on the basis of solving the Palestine question either in or through Jordan, at the expense of both Palestine and Jordan."³⁰

Nevertheless, the Hashemites do not feel that a compromise with Israel, in the context of the UN 242 Resolution and the recognition of Palestinian rights, is impossible. When asked by a BBC reporter if there was anything that Jordan could do to make life easier for Shimon Peres, Crown Prince Hasan denied that Jordan could do anything to influence Israeli politics.

"We have no indications that the present formula of the government of national unity is going to change at all... Our only hope is that whichever incumbent will have the will to go out on a limb if and when the context is right, to say that Israel can once again become a part of the region and can contribute in a cooperative effort to develop the region."³¹

29. "Hussein's Feb 19 Speech," Sec. 05.

30. "Husayn Addresses Summit," Amman Domestic Service, 8 June 1988, as reported in FBIS, 9 June 1988, p. 11.

31. "Crown Price Hasan Interviewed on PLO, Syria, Israel," Amman TV, 29 May 1966, as reported in FBIS, 30 May 1988, p. F-2.

The fact remains that the Jordanian government did divide Palestine with Israel in a relatively stable and peaceful relationship between the 1948 and 1967 wars and it was viewed afterwards, at least by one of Israel's major parties, as a viable partner in a renewed partition of the occupied territories in the so called "Jordanian option."

A major reason cited for Jordan's rejection of this option, and probably the most important one, is the fact that this would flaunt the Arab states' consensus as well as alienate more Palestinians than it would please--given the limited amount of territory that even a Labor Party government would return. However, even a narrow assessment of Israeli aims can raise questions on the viability of such an agreement. Before the rise to prominence of the Israeli right wing and under what was probably the weakest government in Israeli history, that of Levi Eshkol, Israel launched a massive "retaliatory" strike at the Jordanian West Bank village of Samu in November 1966. Supposedly, the cause of the "retaliation" were some of the first raids of the then Syrian-sponsored Palestinian fedayeen groups. This attack caused dangerous rioting on the West Bank, as Palestinians demanded that they be given arms for self defense, since the government was unable to defend them. Even more importantly, it altered Jordan's strategic view of Israel, for it had made no distinction between a status-quo Arab state, Jordan, and the aggressive Syrian regime which had actually sponsored the fedayeen operations. Thus, there was a deep suspicion that Israel was trying to provoke the Jordanians into a rash counterattack or to cause the dispersal of forces from their defensive positions

in a futile attempt to defend every West Bank village as a preliminary to the conquest of the entire West Bank. In the end, these considerations figured prominently in Jordan's decision the following year to join the combined Arab eastern front command leading to the disaster of 1967.³²

Obviously, circumstances now are different, but even more dangerous for Jordan. Perhaps the best assessment of this position has been stated by the leading Israeli specialist on Jordan, Dr. Asher Susser of Tel Aviv University's Dayan Center for Middle Eastern Studies:

"From the Jordanian point of view, there is a big difference between Israel under a Labor government, which believed in negotiating with Jordan for the purpose of returning the West Bank to Jordanian control, and a Likud government, which does not believe in territorial compromise. There are even elements in Likud which believe in making Jordan a Palestinian state. Thus a right-wing government in Israel is perceived by the Jordanians as a threat, whereas a Labor government is perceived as a potential ally."³³

D. THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

"Dealing with the world necessitates permanent flexibility and dynamism. Let us remember that slogans will not be -----

32. Al-Mutawi, op. cit., pp. 69-84.

33. Asher Susser, "King Hussayn Profiled," The Israeli Economist (Feb 1989), pp. 9-10, as reported in Joint Publications Research Service (hereafter referred to as JPRS), NEA-89-008L (28 April 1989), p. 3.

raised if they become chains which tie those who raise them and prevent them from moving and maneuvering."34

From the long-range perspective of the Hashemites, as well as from his personal experience. King Husayn clearly expects that any settlement of the Palestine issue will necessarily involve the major powers - just as major powers were involved in its creation. King Abdullah, of all the sons of Sharif Husayn, was always considered by both the British and Arabs to be the premier diplomatist of the Hashemites. Through this ability, more than through any inherent strength of his positions, Abdullah was able to transform the chaotic post-war position of 1920-21 into a kingdom of his own. If anything, this hereditary skill seems even more evident in the hands of his grandson as is amply attested to by the survival of a weak, artificial and dependent state with the direct and indirect support of a diverse group of foreign supporters - British, Americans, Egyptians, Saudis - and even occasionally Israelis.

It is a fact that all of the parties involved in the 20th century conflict over Palestine have to consider Jordan as, in one way or another, a key part in any solution. This, in turn, has served as a major factor in the legitimization of the Hashemite rule. As a noted Palestinian editor and scholar pointed out, "Palestine is the number one role for King Husayn; it gives

34. "King Husayn Addresses 17th PNC Session," Amman Domestic Service, 22 Nov. 1984, as reported in FBIS, 26 November 1984, p. A-14.

Jordan the international weight it would not otherwise have."³⁵ As we have already noted, the solutions proposed at both levels of the Israeli political spectrum involve the solution of the Palestine problem through Jordan, with the Labor Alignment following its "Jordanian option" involving the return of some territory, while Likud's solutions of either autonomy or annexation would lead in the longer or shorter run to demographic and political movements which would transform the Hashemite Kingdom into the Palestinian state.

In the aftermath of the 1967 war King Husayn played a key role on behalf of the Arab states, with the cooperation of President Nasser, as their envoy to the international community. In November 1967, those efforts were rewarded by the passage of the unanimous Security Council Resolutions 242, embodying the basic principle of the exchange of occupied land for peace.³⁶ As a practical matter, the participation in and subsequent guarantees of a settlement would necessarily have to involve the international community, particularly the two superpowers. This view was stressed by the monarch in his televised address to the National Association of Arab-Americans in 1985:

"We believe," he said, "that the Middle East crisis has such global significance that it cannot be settled in isolation. The area has often been said to be the powderkeg that could set off World War III. It surely is a legitimate interest

35. Personal interview, Mohammed Hallaj, editor of Palestine Perspectives, May 1986.

36. Al-Mutawi, op. cit., pp. 177-80.

of other relevant parties to participate in negotiations designed to ensure such a catastrophe never occurs... We feel that such participations will also add credibility, to the international guarantees that will be required to implement whatever solution is reached."³⁷

The principle of land for peace in UN 242, coupled with the principle of international negotiations in UNSC Resolution 338 of 1973, thus offer the best, and probably the only, hope for a permanent settlement. They have formed the basis for other proposals, including those of the United States and those proposed by the Arab summit at Fez in 1982. King Husayn pointed out this political reality in his address to the Palestine National Council meeting in Amman in November 1984: "The existing conditions in the Palestine, Arab, and international arenas prompt us to adhere to Security Council Resolution 242 as a basis for a just, peaceful settlement. The principle of territory in exchange for peace is our guideline for any initiative we may present to the world."³⁸

Certainly, a key element in the importance of the international context is the necessity of United States involvement in the peace process. As Israel's major foreign backer, it is certain that American guarantees are the only ones that might bring Israel to relinquish territory on the West Bank in exchange for peace. However, American participation has to be in a broad-

37. "Husayn Addresses Annual Convention of Arab-Americans," Amman TV in English, 4 May 1985, as reported in FBIS, 6 May 1985, p. F-2.

38. "King Husayn Addresses 17th PNC Session," op. cit., p. A-17.

er international context, such as that specified by United Nations' Resolutions 242, and 338, leading to the Geneva Conference following the 1973 war. The only logical alternative is for the United States to participate as a broker in what are, essentially, bilateral negotiations with Israel. Jordan's experience with these kinds of negotiations have been highly unsatisfactory. In the disengagement negotiations following the 1973 war, according to King Husayn, "Jordan was shunned from the peace process which was led by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. It transpired that the peaceful efforts were devoted to the Syrian and Egyptian sides, and not to the Palestinian side,"³⁹ Jordanian rejection of the Camp David accords has already been described.

Indeed, Jordan could logically conclude from the fact that its participation in the Camp David autonomy negotiations had been assumed as a given by the United States (as well as by Egypt and Israel) without its consent, that it would have little chance to protect its own interests - let alone secure any acceptable solution for the Palestinians - through bilateral negotiations brokered by the United States. It is thus much more preferable to assure the participation of the United States in the broader internationally recognized context of UN 242, to which the United States as a party to that resolution could hardly object.

Jordan's dilemma vis-a-vis the United States rests on fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, any settlement with

39. Ibid., p. A-15.

Israel depends upon the active leadership and participation of the United States as an honest broker in the negotiations. On the other hand, in the words of King Husayn to the extraordinary Arab Summit convened to respond to the "intifadah",

..."the United States adopts no foreign policy in the Middle East other than support for Israel. Its behavior toward the Arab-Israeli conflict is, unfortunately, based on a policy of crisis management. The United States does not embark on any political move or peace initiative except after the eruption of the situations in the region in the form of wars."⁴⁰

The problem for Jordan is that these wars, while presenting at least a hope of American action in response to a crisis, simultaneously pose direct threats to Jordan itself. Even worse is the fact that Congressional forces, whose consent is necessary for aid and military sales needed to sustain Jordan's independence, are increasingly likely to tie those forms of bilateral relations to Jordan's acceptance of direct negotiations with Israel. Thus, although the Reagan Administration was opposed, Congress insisted in 1985 that arms aid would not be approved unless "accompanied by a Presidential certification of Jordan's public commitment to the recognition of Israel and to negotiate promptly and directly with Israel under the basic tenets of resolutions 242 and 338."⁴¹

40. "Husayn Addresses Summit," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, 8 June 1988, as reported in FBIS, 9 June 1988, p. 12.

41. U. S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing, Proposed Arms Sales to the Kingdom of Jordan, (99th Congress, First Session, 10 October 1985, p. 3.

In the short term, these dilemmas over arms could be solved by turning to other suppliers, such as the Soviet Union, France and the U.K. In the longer term, however, given Israel's already strong position and the unmistakable rightward shift of Israeli politics, what had been an unfortunate but tolerable status quo was being swiftly transformed into a direct threat to Jordan's very existence. Jordan's fundamental strategy, therefore, must be to take maximum advantage of situations of crisis to involve the United States in a search for a settlement, and such a search will, inevitably, lead to a broader international context along the lines of UN 242.

JORDANIAN POLICIES: 1970-1984

A. Introduction.

King Husayn's policies on the Palestine question revolve around the realities of the divisions of the Palestinian people created as a result of the 1967 war. Similarly, these same divisions gave rise to the emergence of the PLO as an independent umbrella organization of Palestinian parties and organizations. Jordan's policies towards the Palestinian question are unique among those of Arab states in that they must deal simultaneously with all segments of the divided Palestinian people, with the sole exception of those incorporated as Israeli citizens in the 1949 boundaries of Israel. Only the PLO, which in theory refuses to recognize any divisions in the whole Palestinian nation including those Palestinians who are now Israeli citizens, has a more comprehensive policy. For Jordan, the relevant segments of the Palestinians can be reduced to three broad categories:

1. The Jordanian-Palestinians of the East Bank;
2. The Palestinians under Israeli occupation in the West Bank, Jerusalem (former Jordanian territory) and the Gaza Strip...usually known as "The West Bank," even though Gaza is fast approaching the population of the West Bank proper.
3. The Palestinians in the Diaspora, principally in the Middle East, but in Europe, the United States and elsewhere as well.

The Jordanian-Palestinians of the East Bank are the most neglected segment in the analysis of Jordanian policy, yet in all

probability they are the most relevant segment from the point of view of the Hashemites. Although the government attempts to downplay their numbers and there is no separate count of them, except those who are still in refugee camps or claiming United Nations refugee aid, they are clearly a majority and possibly a two-thirds majority of the population of the East Bank. As a legacy of the PLO-Hashemite Jordanian Civil War of 1970-71, these are usually thought of as impoverished, radical and discontented refugees, and at least potential supporters of the overthrow of the Hashemites and the establishment of a Palestinian state in Jordan as the stepping-stone for the liberation of all of Palestine. But, from the Hashemite point of view, their greatest success story over the two decades since the 1967 war has been the gradual integration of most of these into the fabric of Jordanian society, including prominent governmental and royal court positions, and their domination of the economic and intellectual life of the state. These accomplishments are apolitical in the active sense (since all overt political activity was banned in Jordan until 1989), but they are of tremendous political impact in the larger sense. Certainly, this community maintains a special interest in the fate of Palestine, particularly the West Bank, and have continuous familial, social and economic ties to the Palestinians of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Most of these ties could only be maintained through the unspoken modus vivendi represented in the Israeli "open bridges" policy and the de facto cooperation of Jordan and Israel.

They have benefited, as have the original East Bank Jordanians, from a situation of general economic prosperity, sustained by Arab and Western aid as well as by the employment remittances and employment opportunities in the Gulf. Administratively, the Jordanian state has provided a stable, free and effective government services to all citizens. Although by no means a democracy, it compared not unfavorably with neighboring Arab regimes, which were even more oppressive or more chaotic (such as Syria or Lebanon).¹

Jordan's Palestinian policy is probably most closely attuned to the views of this segment and, in all probability, their views are closest to King Husayn's personal views. In fact, King Husayn's own views are more "pro-Palestinian" than those of his most loyal "East Bank" elite, tribal and military supporters, including his own Hashemite family. This policy in the 1967-88 period was based on three related premises:

1. Jordan continued to hold de jure sovereignty over the West Bank and East Jerusalem;

2. This fact was recognized by the UN 242 and 338 resolutions, supported by the Arab political consensus, the international community and the Israeli Labor Party. Thus, the only feasible way for the return of the West Bank to Arab rule was through the reestablishment, through some form of international agreement, of Jordanian sovereignty;

1. The best survey of contemporary Jordan, although prior to the intifadah and the resumptions of Jordanian political activities in 1989, is that of Arthur R. Day, East Bank/West Bank, Jordan and the Prospects for Peace, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986).

3. The PLO's rejection of UN 242 and its reliance on the Arab endorsement of their position of "Sole Legitimate Representative" of the Palestinian people at the 1974 Rabat Summit, was ineffective because there was no political or military means to force Israel (backed by the United States) to recognize this position. Indeed, Arab support for this position was modified in practice by their simultaneous support for UN 242.

Thus, the real choice for the Jordanian-Palestinians was between someone who had a possibility of getting back the West Bank through negotiations (King Husayn) and someone who, either because of his character or because of the different constituencies he had to appeal to, vacillated between a political settlement, a military solution through guerrilla war, or a long-term policy of strengthening the PLO in preparation for a decisive struggle at some later date (Arafat). This last policy, in fact, became the dominate one of the mainstream PLO from 1970 to 1982. The danger of such a strategy was obvious, and many even within the PLO admitted privately that it tended to become self-interested bureaucratic and political empire building by an entrenched and unresponsive leadership as symbolized by the PLO "state within a state" in Lebanon.²

From the Hashemite monarch's point of view, his policy towards the Palestinian question yielded a number of dividends. First of all, should this policy actually result in the regaining of the substantial portion of the occupied territories, difficult but not impossible, it would certainly add to his prestige in the -----

2. Personal interview with a PLO official, 1986.

Arab world and among the Palestinians as a whole. Personally, it would erase the stigma of being the Arab leader who had lost all of historic Palestine to the Zionists. Unlike Sadat's policies at Camp David, which were seen in the Arab world as the abandonment of the Palestinians for the sake of Egyptian self-interest, a Jordanian-Israeli peace settlement acceptable to Jordan would mean the freeing of over a million Arabs from Zionist rule and the regaining of the Holy City of Jerusalem. Should this be achieved, the PLO's insistence on its role as "the sole legitimate representative" would seem hollow indeed. In fact, there was every reason to believe that if this outcome seemed possible Arafat would be forced to negotiate a junior role for the PLO in backing the negotiations and hoping to lead a Palestinian section of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian United Kingdom. This was the actual position of Arafat during the period of the Husayn-Arafat Agreement of 1985. The acknowledgement of the separate identity of Palestinians under the United Kingdom plan, coupled with the reality of Jordanian control over foreign policy and security (as well as what would be a domination of the economy by the now much more highly developed East Bank) would satisfy the natural sympathy of the Jordanian-Palestinians for their brothers and would, in fact, open many new opportunities in the unified economies and government for the Jordanian-Palestinians.

On the other hand, should this policy not succeed in regaining the occupied territories, which was in all probability the most likely outcome, the existing stalemate of "no war, no peace" was by no means without advantages of its own.

1. It created a common interest of the Jordanians and Israelis in the suppression of the radical PLO elements which might disturb the rule of either the Hashemites on the East Bank or the Israelis on the West Bank.

2. The "no war" position kept Jordan's position as a recipient of Western political, economic and military aid, especially from the United States, while the "no peace" position kept the support of the rich Arab states, including direct financial subsidies as a "front line" state. This support, in turn, provided the basis for Jordan's economic prosperity and internal stability.

3. It kept the PLO embroiled in its internal conflict between its "realist" wing of Arafat seeking a political settlement and its radicals, particularly George Habbash, seeking a military solution through guerrilla warfare and the overthrow of "reactionary" Arab regimes as a necessary preliminary.

4. All parties interested, even if in the long run, in a political settlement, including Israel, the West, the Soviets and the major Arab governments, had an interest in the preservation of Jordan from both internal and external threats...such as the radical PLO parties and factions, and the Syrians. To the extent that Arafat shared this objective, the mainstream of the PLO was a de facto, albeit silent, ally of King Husayn. An analysis of their policy in the post-1970 period demonstrates that their policies were in fact parallel and complementary. Arafat concentrated on the construction of a PLO "state within a state" in Lebanon. In theory this was designed eventually to confront Israel militarily but in reality it reasserted the PLO's claim to

be a party to a negotiated settlement following the destruction of its Jordanian bases in 1970-71. Although this participation, and indeed exclusive representation, was guaranteed by the Rabat Summit declaration of 1974, it would have little reality without some territorial or organizational base. A purely "paper" organization would soon loose the support of the Palestinians in the Diaspora, not to mention the West Bank. For his part, King Husayn was free to pursue his policy of building the Jordanian state as the bastion against further Zionist expansion to the East while simultaneously playing his international and Arab role as the indispensable Arab party in any peace process based upon the United Nations 242 and 338 resolutions.

5. The uncertainties of a negotiating process, the representation of Palestinians under the situation of Israeli occupation of Jordanian territory, as well as the continuation of a formal state of war, together served to justify the suspension of the Jordanian Constitution, including the holding of elections and martial law restrictions on political activities, the press and other democratic freedoms.

The beauty of King Husayn's Palestinian politics lay in the fact that, ordinarily, they required very little expenditure of effort or resources and, consequently, low risks of great losses. The principal forms of activity in their implementation, in practice, lay in a seemingly endless series of state and private visits, international, Arab and academic conferences, and the reception of a stream of foreign visitors. Aside from the fact that King Husayn, as well as Crown Prince Hassan, found such

intellectual exercises congenial and even stimulating, they served to reinforce the politically advantageous role of the Hashemite monarch as the elder statesman of the Arab world...a role which would inevitably lead to a prominent position in any political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Major changes in these politics, especially if they involved a Jordanian initiative, came about only in response to a very marked change in the environment and only when there was a clear and present danger to Jordanian interests or an equally clear opportunity for a major gain. In the 1970s there were two such initiatives: the move against the PLO in the Jordanian Civil War of 1970-71 and the proposal of the United Kingdom plan of 1972. In the 1980s there were three: the Husayn-Arafat agreement of 1985, the repudiation of this agreement by King Husayn in 1986 and the renunciation of Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank in 1988.

B. The Jordanian Civil War of 1970-71

This event was the gravest challenge to the existence of the Hashemite state in Jordan in its entire history. Although more has been written of it than any other event in the history of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, its impact on Jordan's subsequent politics towards the Palestinian question have rarely been

addressed systematically.³ To do this, we must return to the period immediately following the defeat of the 1967 war.

Jordan's initial position following the disaster of June 1967 was based on two contradictory premises. The first was the political premise of regaining the occupied territory on the West Bank through negotiations based upon the UN 242 Resolution of November 1967. This had the advantage of the support of unanimous Security Council and the consensus of the Arab states, which included the shaken but still formidable figure of Egypt's Nasser. The second premise was the drastic decline in Hashemite prestige and Jordanian internal security coupled with the rise of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations to prominence and eventually to their take-over of the PLO. Thus, King Husayn felt it necessary to declare "We are all fedayeen now" and to allow the formation of a number of Palestinian armed formations on Jordanian territory.

The contradictions inherent in this policy grew too great to sustain in the summer of 1970. Although Arafat still wished to continue cooperation with King Husayn, at least as a tactic, the radical PLO organizations led by the PFLP were openly challenging the authority of the Jordanian government even in the capital, and were clear in their intentions to remove the Hashemites in favor of a Palestinian government on the East Bank. Israeli retaliation against the PLO was devastating the Jordan Valley and

3. The best accounts of this period are those contained in William B. Quant, Decade of Decisions (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), and Malcolm H. Kerr, The Arab Cold War (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

threatened to engulf the entire kingdom in a full-scale war, for the fedayeen headquarters were located right in Amman itself. The most fervent Hashemite supporters, even within the elite bedouin combat units of the army, were becoming so humiliated with the passivity and hesitation of the monarch that there was a danger to their continued loyalty. There were still 20,000 Iraqi troops (controlled by a Ba'th regime) on Jordanian soil, while the neighboring Syrian regime was still under the control of the radical Ba'th faction that had first provided military training and equipment to the PLO guerrillas and had thus precipitated the 1967 war. Both Ba'th regimes were open enemies of Arab monarchies in general and the Hashemites in particular.

On the positive side, to be sure, there was the hoped for support of the United States and the often-declared policy of Israel not to allow the establishment of a PLO state in Jordan. Also on the positive side was the fact that Nasser was in the same boat, though without the complication of the presence of an armed PLO force on his territory. Like Husayn, Nasser's post-1967 policy was based on a contradiction. While working for a political solution within the context of the UN 242 Resolution, he simultaneously was involved in an escalating military confrontation with the Israelis along the cease fire line on the Suez Canal. Israeli superiority, especially deep penetration air raids, forced him to accept the disengagement plan of Secretary of State William Rogers in August 1970. The PLO's public criticism of this from its Cairo-based radio resulted in the closure of the station. Although it was infinitely more dangerous for King Husayn to move against the PLO than for Nasser, it was

reassuring that Nasser could not lend his weight to the expected pan-Arab condemnation that such a move would surely entail. Thus, Husayn acted without explicit prior assurances of support from the United States and Israel, although he did appeal for these assurances prior to his military confrontation with the attacking Syrian armor.⁴

The political position established through the success of the Jordanian forces versus the PLO forces and the Syrians was that Jordan was opting for a political solution. It would not allow a military challenge to Israel from its territory and, most importantly, the position of the PLO as a rival for the leadership of the Palestinian-Jordanian population of the East Bank was eliminated as a real option. As a whole, the Palestinian-Jordanian population of the East Bank did not involve themselves in the Civil War, with the exception of the refugee camps where the fedayeen had their bases.

The West Bank, securely under Israeli occupation, was not involved directly in the Civil War but its lesson could have hardly been lost upon these Palestinians: the military option of the PLO had been defeated and the major Arab states had accepted, albeit with many warnings and protestations, the Jordanian policy of a political solution. This made King Husayn the best, if not the only, option for the removal of the Israeli occupation. For the PLO, the war certainly served to reinforce its negative view of the Hashemites but, on the other hand, Arafat had always

4. Interview, Ambassador (Ret.), L. Dean Brown, Washington, D.C., 1986.

questioned the wisdom of the radical PLO parties policies of challenging the Jordanian regime beyond its breaking point. These actions, including the hijacking of Western airliners and attempted assassinations of the king, meant that they shared the blame for the debacle.

C. The United Arab Kingdom Plan, 1972

The results of the Jordanian Civil War initially marginalized and externalized the role of the PLO. From a position where it had been able to operate freely and share de-facto authority with the Jordanian state, it was now forced into a new refugee status in Lebanon. There it had to build a new political and military base among a largely apolitical and much less numerous population of Palestinian refugees. For their part, however much the Jordanian-Palestinians might agree with the ultimate PLO aim of an independent Palestinian state, they had to deal with the existing reality of the Jordanian state, and the PLO could hardly help them in those dealings. King Husayn's objective of negotiating for the return of the West Bank appeared much more credible than did the PLO's position of seeking "a secular, democratic state in all of Palestine" through protracted guerrilla war. The PLO and its radical Ba'th allies in Syria had been defeated by the Hashemite Arab Army and Air Force while the Arab states looked on or passed ineffective resolutions. Indeed, the radical Ba'th regime had been overthrown by the pragmatic General al-Assad as a direct consequence of its failed, adventurous attempt to overthrow King Husayn. Thus a military solution to the Palestine question, which was the only solution then offered by the

PLO, seemed remote indeed. On the other hand, King Husayn's actions had proved his ability to control Palestinians radicals on the East Bank and that could only impress the Israelis that he could be trusted to control them on the West Bank as well -- as the Hashemites had done before 1967.

The focus of Hashemite Palestinian policy thus shifted from the East Bank to the segment of the Palestinians formerly under Jordanian rule on the West Bank. Given the stated positions of the major players--Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the United States -- negotiations for a settlement along the lines of UN 242 now appeared to be merely a matter of time. This was all the more likely following the 1970 withdrawal of Begin's Gahal (the earlier version of the Likud Bloc) from Israel's national coalition government in protest over Israel's acceptance of the principle of withdrawal in the Sinai included in the Rogers Plan.

In later years, as in his speech of February 1986 suspending the agreement between the PLO and Jordan, King Husayn referred to his United Arab Kingdom Plan as an appeal to the PLO to demonstrate Jordan's long term commitment to Palestinian political rights beyond the mere acquiring of the territory lost in 1967. It is not impossible that this considerations has some validity. Even in the wake of the bitterness of the Civil war there were moderate elements within the PLO who realized that Jordan continued to be vital to their ultimate goal of a Palestinian state -- and more might be achieved by cooperation than by confrontation.

Still, it is curious that King Husayn waited a year and a half to announce this policy. The time sequence demonstrates, in

fact, that the United Arab Kingdom plan was announced to give a political foundation for the Hashemites regaining in practice the representation of the West Bank Palestinians that they continued to claim de jure. It was announced the month before municipal elections on the West Bank and undoubtedly had some effect, despite its repudiations by the PLO and by Egypt, which went so far as to sever diplomatic relations with Jordan. Although it might be supposed that the Hashemite regime which had never given fair political representation to its Palestinian citizens would have little attraction for the West Bank Palestinians when compared to the PLO, this was not necessarily the case.⁵ From a practical point of view, the messianic vision of a secular democratic state in all of Palestine offered by the PLO was an impossible dream -- and a dream that could be made a reality only by military means. Jordan, on the other hand, offered the more attainable goal of ending Israeli occupation rule by political means. Any such a return of the West Bank to Jordanian rule, with or without the participation of its inhabitants, would bring grave consequences for anti-Hashemite elements returned to the scrutiny of the Jordanian security services. Finally, the PLO had never really developed its own power base on the West Bank. Although founded in Jerusalem in 1964, the PLO's leadership had always been overwhelmingly from the Palestinian refugees from areas within Israel's 1949 borders. Its centers were in Cairo,

5. Shmuel Sandler and Hillel Frisch, Israel, the Palestinians and the West Bank, A Study in Intercommunal Conflict (lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984), p. 91. This book is one of the most valuable background studies for the understanding of the current problems raised by the intifadah.

Beirut and Damascus, not on the West Bank. Prior to 1967 Jordan had prevented the PLO from building a structure on the West Bank. The PLO's activities were specifically launched in 1966. In the years between 1967 and 1970 the PLO concentrated on building its organizational and military bases on the East Bank although, ultimately, its military strategy based on the experience of the Algerian war of independence called for the mobilization of the entire Palestinian population under Israeli control.

In his offer of a Jordanian version of Palestinian autonomy ("Hashemitism with a human face") King Husayn aimed to bolster his supporters on the West Bank in preparation for the municipal elections of 1972. On the West Bank itself, this policy was a resounding success. Although pro-PLO mayors were elected in Ramallah, al Bireh and Tulkarm, traditional stalwarts of the Jordanian period were elected in Bethlehem, Nablus and Hebron. In all, eighteen of the twenty-one mayors represented traditional elements although many of them were from a new generation of younger professionals.⁶ Perhaps most significant was the fact that participation was 85 percent (versus 50 percent under Jordanian rule) despite the fact that PLO had totally rejected the election. King Husayn clearly won the first round in his contest with the PLO for the representation of the West Bank Palestinians.

This election had immediate repercussions on the PLO, which was forced to develop a program of political activity within the

6. Ibid., p. 86.

territories and with regard to achievement of its ultimate goal through political as well as military means. Thus, at the 10th session of the PNC in Cairo in 1972, a month after the United Arab Kingdom Plan, resolutions called for the organizing of trade unions and providing assistance to organizations and institutions in the territories. In 1973 the PNC called first for mobilization and second for arming the masses -- clearly, the mobilization called for was the political mobilization within the territories. This mobilization was to be accomplished by the formation of a political organization which became known as the Palestinian National Front. Finally, following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, came the PNC's June 1974 resolution for a plausible political strategy, and one which appealed to the inhabitants of the West Bank. This was the establishment of a "militant, "independent popular administration in every part of Palestine which is liberated."7

Bolstered by the greater self-confidence of the Arab states as a result of their relative success in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, and by the PLO's adoption of a more realistic political program, the Arab states endorsed the exclusive representational role of the PLO for the Palestinian people at the Rabat Arab Summit of 1974. King Husayn strenuously but futilely objected to this. By the time of the 1976 municipal elections on the West Bank the combination of the organizational work of the Palestine National Front and the increased prestige of the PLO brought

7. Abdallah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine, (London: Zed Books, Ltd., 1983), ,p. 141.

about by Arab and international recognition -- including Arafat's speech at the United Nations General Assembly -- resulted in the overwhelming defeat of the pro-Jordanian officials elected in 1972. Only Elias Fray's of Bethlehem managed to survive. The PLO had clearly won the second round of the contest to represent the West Bank Palestinians. The most prominent pro-Hashemite politician, former mayor Shaykk Muhammad Ali Ja'bari of Hebron, was unimpressed. He wanted a new Palestinian party for the people of the West Bank, not the PLO, to represent West Bank interests: "The PLO is incapable of negotiating -- it wrought havoc in Jordan and now is destroying Lebanon. It would do the same here given the chance. The West Bank people should authorize Jordan to negotiate on its behalf, so that afterwards the people will have the opportunity of self-determination."⁸

King Husayn continued to regard the Rabat decision as a mistake. It raised once again the question of the representation of the Jordanian-Palestinian on the East Bank. With regard to the West Bank, it represented a needless complication to a political settlement by making the total settlement, including the establishment of a PLO government in the liberated territories, the first step in the process. This was hardly likely to be acceptable to Israel or its supporters. Instead, the first step in a political settlement should be the ending of Israel's military occupation. This was increasingly important as the occupation showed signs of becoming permanent with the construction of -----

8. Elie Rekkess and Dan Avidan, "The West Bank and Gaza Strip" in C. Legum and H. Shaked, eds., The Middle East Contemporary Survey, Vol. One, 1976-77 (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1978).

Israeli settlements and the growing strength of the radical,religious Zionists of the "Eretz Israel" movement, who rejected withdrawal from even an inch of the sacred soil of Israel. By their decision at Rabat the Arab governments had given up their responsibility for the Palestinians that they had assumed in 1947 and which they had shared with the PLO since 1964. Now they had given a unit veto to the PLO over any future settlement, but the PLO was itself scarcely an independent, unified entity. Its various components were a mixed lot and many, in fact, had connections with, including primary loyalties to, other Arab -- and even non-Arab -- states.

The positions of all Arab parties regarding a negotiated peace settlement remained static following the Rabat Summit of 1974. The PLO had the mandate from the Arab states and an official policy favoring at least a partial settlement, but it lacked unity, leadership or will-power to do so. Instead it concentrated on the building of its bureaucracy and military strength in Lebanon. In this process it became increasingly drawn into the self-destructive game of meddling in the internal politics of an Arab state, thus repeating its mistakes in Jordan prior to 1970 with far less justification.

The Arab states most eager to negotiate for the return of their occupied territory were Jordan and Egypt. As the leader of the strongest Arab state and with the prestige of leadership in the 1973 war, President Sadat was able to take the critical step of flying to Jerusalem and accepting a formal peace treaty with Israel. Jordan was not strong enough to follow such a policy; it

could hardly survive the ostracism of the Arab world as Egypt managed to do after the Baghdad Arab Summit of 1978. It soon became clear, in addition, that the Israeli interpretation of Palestinian "autonomy" advanced by the Likud government held little attraction for either Palestinians or for Jordan.

D. Jordanian Policies of the Early 1980s

Jordan's three policies of the 1980s -- the policy of alliance with Arafat; the break with Arafat and the contest with the PLO for the support of the West Bank Palestinians and, finally, the renunciation of Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank -- could all, in the final analysis, be considered as successive responses to a single danger. The event precipitating these policies was the internal change in Israeli politics associated with the victory of the radical wing of the Likud in the elections of 1981. The second Likud government, dominated by the formidable figure of Ariel Sharon as Defense Minister, was much more radical than the first Likud government of 1977 in both its foreign policy in general and in relations to the West Bank in particular. Almost as alarming was the change in United States policy through its seeming collaborations with or complacency towards the new Israeli policies. Combined of the strategic importance of Israel to the formation of an anti-Soviet strategic consensus in the Middle East and the view that the PLO represented an obstacle to this end or, in the worst case, a Soviet client, the United States shifted its policies towards the Palestinian issue. First, it withdrew its objection to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as illegal under interna-

tional law. Second, it welcomed Israel's efforts to resolve the position of the PLO by military means in its 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

For King Husayn, the cooperation of the radical Zionists of Likud with the radical right of the Reagan administration was no less than a matter of life or death for his regime. This death could be either slow and agonizing or rapid and violent but, given the convergence of these policies, it was inevitable. The aim of these policies, which Sharon at least made little secret of, was the transference of the Palestinian population from the West to the East Bank and turning Jordan into the Palestinian state. On the slower schedule of pressures and settlements, the discouraged Palestinians would realize that they had no hope or future on the West Bank and would leave more or less voluntarily. On a more precipitous scale, an incident would no doubt be found, as in Lebanon in 1982, to justify a full-scale attack on Amman. This would, most likely, precipitate the fall of the Hashemite regime and a fight between the East Bankers and the PLO over the ruins. This would lead to an Israeli protectorate, either over the whole of Jordan or over a "security zone" -- (as in Southern Lebanon) extending from the Jordan to the crests of the crests of the East side of the Jordan Rift Valley.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly how this new threat endangered the very existence of Jordan. Two essential conditions after 1967 allowed Jordan to survive, i.e., the tacit support of Israel and the overt support of the United States. Israel under the Labor Alignment favored its "Jordanian option"

of a partial return of the West Bank under the terms of the United Nations 242 Resolution as interpreted by the Allon Plan. Even the Likud Bloc's "autonomy" formula adopted at Camp David with the endorsement of the United States sought to involve Jordan an active partner in the administration of the autonomous West Bank Palestinians. Despite the absence of genuine progress towards a final peace settlement, Jordan's policy of hostility towards any serious Palestinian military or political activities upon its territory coupled with its residual influence on the West Bank made the day-to-day occupation easier for Israel.

Although these dangers were certainly genuine, the eventual outcome of the events in Lebanon simultaneously created some favorable conditions for a Jordanian peace policy. Those could be seen across the board in the Arab world, within the PLO, in the international environment and, eventually, within Israel itself.

In the Arab world, the humiliating inability of the Arab governments to do anything practical to aid the PLO in its unequal struggle with the Israeli Army, or even to protect innocent women and children from deliberate massacre in Sabra and Shatilla camps, finally forced them into endorsing a reasonable outline of a political settlement at the Fez Arab Summit of 1982. These were virtually the same proposals -- the Fahd Plan -- over which they had deadlocked the previous year in the same city. The direct defeat administered to Syrian forces, particularly in the air, in Lebanon at least temporarily forced Assad into a lower profile. All Arab leaders felt directly threatened by the Israeli occupation of an Arab capital and were rightly fearful of

popular reactions among their own peoples. As had been the case with the Americans in Viet Nam, the war in Lebanon was televised throughout the Arab world. Undoubtedly as well, fears of popular reactions were stimulated by the activities of the Islamist elements inspired by the example of the Iranian revolution. Another element stemming from the Iranian Revolution -- the Gulf War -- had an indirect effect on the climate of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Military attacks on the Arab homeland in the gulf made these regimes less concerned with Jordanian initiatives for a peaceful settlement in Palestine. Thus, especially if these efforts could be coordinated with the PLO, King Husayn could be seen as fulfilling an Arab mandate and not acting in Hashemite self-interest.

Such coordination with the PLO, at least with its chairman, seemed all the more likely as a result of the Lebanon War. Yasir Arafat's fortunes seemed to have hit their absolute nadir by the end of 1983 and the Palestinians revolution appeared to be in reverse gear as he lost his last base in a state bordering on Israel. But these fortunes were not as low as they appeared as they related primarily to the military option. As he had shown in his speech before the United Nations, the Palestinian revolutions carried a gun in one hand and an olive branch in the other. The political options remained open. The Syrian-backed factions within al Fatah under Abu Musa aimed at establishing an alternative legitimate leadership in place of Arafat, but in the end they were unable to do so. Arafat survived while they and their patron, Assad, isolated themselves from a position where they

patron, Assad, isolated themselves from a position where they could sabotage a political option from within. Hitherto, Arafat had felt it necessary to appease the radical messianic wing of the PLO in the interests of organizational unity. As late as the abortive negotiations in 1982-83 for a joint peace approach with King Husayn, Arafat had been forced to renege on his agreement when he was unable to carry the majority -- at least at an acceptable price -- to back him. They instead called for reopening negotiations with Jordan, an option which King Husayn bitterly rejected.

Arafat, to be sure, had several options open in attempting a political settlement. He could go it on his own, but this would require a good deal more support than he possessed within the organization. Almost certainly as well, such an approach would be dismissed with contempt by both the Israelis and the United States. Israel rejected the PLO as a negotiating partner as a matter of principle, for it held that it was a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel. The United States, however, had stated that it would consider the PLO as a negotiating party provided that it renounce terrorism and accept the UN 242 Resolution which calls for, among other things, recognition of Israel's right to exist. However, in the context of late 1983, it is doubtful that the United States would have accepted such a declaration from a position of such weakness, since the hope existed that Arafat would soon become totally irrelevant.

Arafat could certainly have approached the Saudis or the King of Morocco, as the chairman of the last Arab Summit at Fez, for

the convening of an international conference to implement the Fez declaration. Such an approach might be feasible but it would surely be time consuming given the Saudi anxiety to achieve Arab unanimity before taking any action. Any reopening of the Fez formula would face fierce opposition from Syria, which had instigated and supported the split within al Fatah.

Egypt's President Mubarak was another possibility. Egypt, of course, was the principal United States ally in the Arab world and had the advantage of being the only Arab state with direct ties to Israel. Anxious to remove the stigma of Arab isolation imposed as a result of Egypt's Camp David policy, Mubarak would certainly be eager to associate with the PLO in a peace negotiation. However, the impact of Camp David was still too fresh. Thus, although Arafat did visit Mubarak after his ouster from Lebanon, he preferred to reactivate his approach through King Husayn which had been stalled in the spring of 1983.

The war in Lebanon in 1982 also affected United States policy. Immediately following the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut, President Reagan's speech on September 1 offered what he termed "a fresh start." Although this fresh start was put in the context of the Camp David agreement -- hardly a favorable reference for either the PLO or Jordan -- it did offer some major concessions to Arab interests. The five year autonomy period of Camp David was to lead to free elections for a self governing Palestinian authority. The United States could not support any additional Israeli settlements during this period. Although an independent Palestinian state was not seen as a possible outcome,

"self government by the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza in association with Jordan offers the best chance for a durable, just, and lasting peace."⁹ Although there were a number of points to which the PLO was opposed in this statement, especially the denial of an independent Palestinian state as a feasible outcome and the denial of the PLO's right to represent the Palestinian people, it was very close to Jordan's policies. Certainly, it was closer to Jordan's and to the PLO's policies than it was to the policies of the Begin-Sharon government.

The changed position of the Soviet Union following the war in Lebanon made it even more marginal than it had been since the onset of the Camp David process in 1977. It provided little more than sympathy to its friends within the PLO and even to its formal ally, Syria, could provide little more than replacements for the Soviet supplied missile batteries and fighters which had been destroyed with such relative ease and little loss by the United States supplied Israelis. Finally, in November 1982 came the death of Brezhnev followed in rapid succession by three Soviet leaders in the space of two and a half years.

Perhaps most important of all for the revival of a Jordanian peace initiative in cooperation with the PLO were the internal changes in Israel following the invasion of Lebanon. Although it succeeded in driving the PLO out of Lebanon as a military threat, and even as a political force, the Israeli strike did not eliminate the PLO nor establish a client state in Lebanon. Sharon's

9. Quoted in Harold H. Saunders, The Other Walls, The Politics of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1985), p. 174.

nate the PLO nor establish a client state in Lebanon. Sharon's actions forced his removal from his position as Minister of Defense. The eventual condition of stalemate and guerrilla war against the Israeli occupying army turned Israeli opinion against a war it had originally supported enthusiastically. Even Begin became too discouraged to continue in office, forcing Israeli elections before the termination of the government's mandate. The outcome of the 1984 elections, though not all that Jordan had hoped for, still provided an opportunity for negotiations. On the one hand, even given the unpopularity of the continued occupation of Lebanon and the disastrous economic conditions at home, the Israeli electorate still indicated the strength of the Likud and its even more radical-right allies by giving it a virtual tie in the elections. This indicated the long-term dangers of the lack of a peace settlement to Jordan and the Palestinians. On the other hand, the narrow plurality of Labor allowed the creation of a national coalition government with Likud under the unique arrangement that Shimon Peres would be the prime minister for the first two years and Yitzhak Shamir for the second two year term. A narrow window was opened for peace negotiations and the old antagonists -- Yasir Arafat and King Husayn -- would with unaccustomed alacrity move to take advantage of the situation.

III

THE KING HUSAYN-YASIR ARAFAT AGREEMENT, FEBRUARY 1985

King Husayn had attempted to secure a political settlement with Israel through international negotiations based on the principle of the exchange of territory for peace, as embodied in the UN 242 Resolutions, ever since 1967. But this goal had been frustrated by, among other obstacles, the rise of the PLO and its international status as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians people endorsed by the Rabat Arab Summit of 1974. In the course of the 1970s, however, the mainstream of the PLO, led by Fatah's Arafat, in fact had opted for a similar political process through the increasing emphasis on diplomacy over military means. But its hopes were frustrated by the fact that the Israelis -- with United States backing -- refused to deal with the political role of the PLO as representing the people of the occupied territories. On the fundamental issue of negotiations with Israel for the return of the occupied territories to Arab rule, if one could accept their public declarations, Jordan and the PLO were in broad agreement. An obvious solution to this dilemma was through the cooperation of the two parties whereby Jordan could combine its international status and acceptability to Israel with the PLO's representative role and popular support among the Palestinians in the Diaspora and the occupied territories in a joint political stand.

The obstacles to such an approach were, however, many. First, there was the legacy of bitterness and distrust from the Jordanian Civil War on both sides. From the Jordanian point of

view, the dangers of cooperation with the PLO lay in the possibility that the PLO would once again be tempted to assert its leadership of the East Bank Jordanian-Palestinians and/or it would resume its military activities and provoke a direct Israeli retaliation against Jordan. This latter possibility was much more likely under the Likud. Even if Arafat was personally sincere, which they doubted, there was the reality that the PLO was a coalition of many different groups, which in turn were beholden to many different foreign patrons, thus subjecting the largely moderate leadership of the Fatah mainstream to pressure from the radical rejectionist and leftist elements. Arafat was well aware of these restraints. Of course, he shared the Palestinians bitterness from the 1970 Civil War and the fear that any agreement with King Husayn would only mean that the PLO would be used to give legitimacy to the narrow Hashemite interests of returning its lost territories to Jordanian control.

Underlying these differences was the even more fundamental question of the disparate nature of the two regimes, if one could consider the PLO as at least an incipient government. Although lacking the territorial basis for free elections (that being the object of its existence) the PLO was the most democratic and representative of all Arab regimes. On the other hand, although Jordan was hardly the least representative and most oppressive of Arab regimes, it was clearly different from either the Palestinian ideal or reality. It was an authoritarian monarchy, which had suspended political parties since 1957 and elections since 1967. Although there were democratic rights, institutions and procedures embodied in its constitution, this document had been

suspended for a much longer period of time than it had ever functioned--and when it did function it was as it was interpreted by the monarch. As one Palestinian former professor at a Jordanian university, now a pro-PLO editor in the United States, put it: "One cannot function as a human being, much less as an educator in Jordan; I would continually have to worry that a joke made to a taxi driver would be reported to the secret police."¹

In the period between the Syrian-inspired revolt in the ranks of al Fatah forces in Lebanon (May 1983) and the conclusion of the Husayn-Arafat Accord (February 1985) in Amman, Jordanian and Arafat politics gradually converged. The chief motivations for Jordanian policy remained the fear of the consequences of creeping or outright annexation of the occupied territories by Israel. In September 1984, the national unity government agreement in Israel put Shimon Peres back in the prime ministers' seat, albeit for only a two year term. This created a brief window of opportunity, but King Husayn knew that he needed support from a credible Palestinian source to take the risk of negotiations with Israel. Practically, this meant Arafat and the PLO, who still held the precarious mandate of the Rabat Summit as sole legitimate representative. This mandate too was in serious danger as the Arafat's credibility fell after his removal from Lebanon and even further due to the "civil war" within al Fatah. Strategically, these developments elevated the importance of the occupied territories inhabitants' role in a peaceful settlement.

1. Interview with a Palestinian scholar, Washington, D.C., 1987.

This meant that Hashemite policy needed to enhance the position of Arafat within the occupied territories and, hence, within the PLO.

The last meeting of the Palestine National Council (the 16th) had been held in February 1983 in Algiers. This had been preceded by public criticism, led by the PFLP and DFLP, of Arafat's earlier negotiations with King Husayn based on accepting the Reagan Plan as a basis for international negotiations. The 16th PNC had rejected the Reagan Plan as "a sound basis for a just and permanent settlement," but it had compromised on a key provision of that plan--a confederation of Palestine and Jordan. A confederation could be established after the independence of Palestine on the basis of two independent states.² However, following the revolt within Fatah, followed by renewed fighting in Lebanon in which Arafat was driven from Tripoli by a combination of rival Palestinian groups with Syrian military support, it was necessary for him to make a choice. Either a new Palestine National Council would endorse a more militant strategy and thus leave Arafat with the titular leadership of a united organization or he would lead his moderate wing into an alliance with King Husayn, based upon a joint negotiation team and a confederation. Into the fall of 1984, the decision hung in the balance until the final week. It was uncertain that Arafat would actually go through with the scheduled meeting of the PNC in Amman which would be boycotted by major parties of the democratic alliance,

2. Abdollah Frangi, The PLO and Palestine (London: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 251.

the PFLP and DFLP, and perhaps causing an irrevocable split in the PLO.³

In the end, the advantages of the Amman venue proved too tempting for Arafat. The facilities for propaganda to rally PLO supporters on the West Bank through Jordanian television would hold the pro-Arafat majority in the occupied territories to their loyalty. Beyond that were the organizational and logistical advantages of being able to reopen Fatah offices in Amman to strengthen these contacts. There was always a danger that the PLO's prestige would decline to such a low level that the Palestinians of the West Bank would themselves support and cooperate with an independent move by the king to enter into negotiations. Although this might be seen at first glance to be a distant or impossible dream, in fact the situation was rapidly changing in the occupied territories. Even under the Israeli coalition, the "iron fist" policies of Defense Minister Rabin were intensifying pressures on the Palestinians under occupation. King Husayn's arguments that Israeli pressures were a threat to the very existence of the community on Palestinian soil, along with the hope that there was now a reasonable opportunity for negotiations based upon an Arab consensus (the Fez Plan), international framework (UN 242 and 338), and the United States (the Reagan Plan) positions with a plausible Israeli negotiator (Peres), were beginning to have an impact among even the most dedicated PLO supporters. As one PLO official from the West Bank remarked -----

3. Rami G. Khuri, "How Close to Being Leaderless," Jordan Times (Amman), 13 Nov 1984, p. 4, as reported in FBIS, 14 November 1984, pp. F-1, 2.

privately, "If King Husayn really could negotiate the return of most of the occupied territories, he would be a hero on the West Bank, and Arafat would be finished."⁴

In fact, in the wake of a common opposition to Camp David, Jordanian-PLO cooperation had already been revived on the ground in the occupied territories after 1977. On the Arab front, the joint Jordanian-PLO committee supervised the distribution of Arab aid designed to maintain the solidarity of the Palestinians under occupation. Within the politics of the occupied territories the National Guidance Committee, essentially a response to Camp David, brought together the recently triumphant pro-PLO elite, especially the mayors and town councillors elected in 1976, with the defeated pro-Jordanians. Even though the remaining pro-Jordanian elected officials, Fray's in Bethlehem and al-Shawwa in Gaza, were not members, a pro-Jordanian faction did exist among the ostensibly pro-PLO committee. Of its twenty-three members, ten were mainstream Fatah supporters, four were from the PLO rejectionist camp and four "exhibited pro-Jordanian tendencies."⁵ Behind a facade of unity, these factions struggled for control of the committee and weakened its effectiveness. A major bone of contention to leftists was what they saw as an alliance between pro-Fatah elements and pro-Jordanians arrived at containing the hard line leftist forces. The moderates, they complained, were too anxious in preserving and even increasing contacts with -----

4. Interview with a PLO official, Cambridge, MA., 1986.

5. Emile Sahliyah, In Search of Leadership, West Bank Politics Since 1967 (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988, p. 23.

Jordan and reluctant to confront the Israeli military government. They even objected to Jordan's role in the distribution of pan-Arab aid under the agreement reached at the Baghdad Summit of 1978. Even before its being outlawed by the Begin government in 1982, the National Guidance Committee had become ineffective since 1980 due to these internal conflicts.

However, the cooperation of pro-Arafat "pragmatists" with pro-Jordanians continued and even flourished as the PLO lost its bases in Lebanon. The struggle within the PLO served the pro-Jordanians as Arafat's pragmatists attempted to broaden their support. Fatah and Arafat periodically dealt and met with pro-Jordanian leaders while some of the pan-Arab funds allotted to the PLO were spent to gain the backing of pro-Jordanian politicians, who now emerged in new respectability in the light of direct contacts between Chairman Arafat and King Husayn.⁶ Clearly, there was a large and important constituency, at least within the political elites on the West Bank and Gaza, that was supportive of a pragmatic alliance between Jordan and the PLO aimed at securing Israeli withdrawal.

King Husayn's speech to the 17th PNC on November 22, 1984 was a masterful appeal to this constituency.⁷ He reminded them of their struggle to preserve their independent decision-making by defeating "attempts to impose tutelage upon you" in holding

6. Ibid., p. 165.

7. "King Husayn's Address," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, 22 November 1984, as reported in FBIS, 26 November 1984, pp. A-13-A-18.

this meeting against Syrian opposition. Of course, he did not mention Syria by name. He defended the "special relationship" between Jordan and Palestine, receiving applause at the mention of King Abdullah's name. He invoked the holy status of Jerusalem. "the invader's threshold to Jordan," making play of words on the name of al Fatah by adding, "just as Jordan is the Fatah (conquest) gateway to Palestine." The future of Palestine seemed dark because this special relationship had been eliminated from Arab and Palestinian actions. The way of reversing this trend, naturally, was to revive cooperation. A "Jordanian-Palestinian option" required adherence to UN Resolution 242; "the principle of territory in exchange for peace is our guideline for any initiative we may present the world." This provides a framework for an international conference under UN auspices and it is not negotiable, but the PLO is to attend this conference on an equal basis with other parties.

The Jordanian-Palestinian relationship in the future is a matter for these two peoples alone, "no one has the right to determine this relationship on their behalf or to interfere with it, be he enemy, brother, or friend," Furthermore, involving this issue in efforts to regain the territories would merely provide another matter for obstruction by the enemy. Finally, he again appealed directly to the people under occupation: "The occupied territory can tolerate no courtesies or one-upmanship. Both are weapons we place in Israel's hands in order to complete

its plans and programs for annexing the territory and expelling its inhabitants."⁸

Chairman Arafat played his part by announcing in his speech the policy of moving towards a political solution through an international conference based upon "our adherence to international resolutions over legitimacy" including the Fez summit resolutions. Perhaps nothing in what Arafat said could equal his commitment to the independence of Jordan beside an independent Palestine.

"We clearly announce this so that no person or side will have an illusions about any alternative homeland except Palestine.... All of us will stand as one man, in solidarity with our brothers and kinfolk in Jordan in order to destroy Sharon and his dreams and to answer his serious threats to Jordan."⁹

Negotiations for a formal agreement were opened immediately, intensifying in the new year when they reached a conclusion on February 11, 1985. This agreement contained five clauses. Two of these clauses were related to the broader aspects of the Palestine question and did not focused on the occupied territories, i.e., solving the refugee problem in accordance with UN resolutions and a catch all, "solving all aspects of the Palestine questions." The operative clauses relative to the principles and mechanism for a settlement were:

8. Ibid., p. A-17.

9. "Yasir Arafat Address," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, 22 November 1984, as reported in FBIS, 26 November 1984, pp. A-13.

"Land in exchange for peace as cited in the UN resolution, including the Security Council resolutions."

The right to self determination "when the Jordanians and Palestinians move to achieve this within the framework pan Arab confederation that is intended to be established between the two states."

Negotiations within the framework of an international conference under UN auspices, consisting of the five permanent member of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict "including the PLO, which is the Palestinian peoples sole legitimate representative, within a joint delegation--a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation."¹⁰

The history of the Amman Agreement's attempted implementation is covered in elaborate detail in King Husayn's speech of February 19, 1986, in which he announced the suspension, but not the cancellation, of the agreement, and it is not our intention to review this here. If we look, however, at the fundamental causes for its failure we find two basic differences in interpretation--differences that were left deliberately ambiguous in the text.¹¹ First, the Security Council resolutions are cited in

10. The text of the Husayn-Arafat Agreement is given in Saunders, op. cit., p. 179. It was first officially released in a press conference by the Jordanian Minister of Information on 23 February 1985, see "Hikmat Releases 'Text' of PLO-Jordanian Agreement," FBIS, 25 February 1985, p. F-1.

11. These causes, as discussed here, relate to the internal Jordanian and PLO policies and not to the external causes, especially those having to do with the policies of Israel and the United States. Arafat anticipated these difficulties in his airport press conference following the signing of the accords with regard to American views: "I am not optimistic over this administration."

general and not as UN 242 and 338 by name and, secondly, the achievement of self-determination and confederation between Palestine and Jordan.

King Husayn clearly felt that the Jordanian and Palestinian positions were close enough to achieve the degree of coordination necessary to initiate negotiations. On the issue of the endorsement of UN 242, which the United States held to be a precondition for PLO participation in negotiations and which Arafat had always skirted by saying that the Palestinians endorsed all UN resolutions, the king felt that there were only three binding Security Council resolutions, 242 and 338 and the resolutions against Israeli annexation of Jerusalem. As the first point of the Amman Agreement cited the UN resolutions in the context of the principle of "land in exchange for peace," which is the principal of UN 242, what Arafat had in fact endorsed was this resolution specifically.¹²

With regard to the future confederation between Jordan and Palestine, Husayn felt that as soon as territories were given back, whether all at once or in stages, Palestinian self-determination would take effect. The agreement called for this to take place in the context of the confederation of Jordan and Palestine. "Like the Jordanians, they will decide on the plan of -----
...Continued...

It is completely biased to the Israeli point of view," see Salamah B. Ni'matt, The Jordan Times (Amman), of 13 February 1985, as reported in "West Bank and Gaza Reactions," FBIS, 13 February 1985, p. F-1.

12. "King Husayn Interviewed on Mideast Peace Prospects," Vienna (Austria) Television, 25 February 1985, as reported in FBIS, 26 February 1985, p. F-1.

confederation... I think details have to be worked out later, but the idea of confederation is fairly anchored with us already."¹³

On the procedural issue of negotiations through an international conference under United Nations auspices and including the PLO as an equal party within a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, it was clear that the international consensus meant that such an invitation could only be issued by the United Nations to parties who accepted the UN 242 and 338 resolutions. This had been pointed out by King Husayn in his address to the PNC in November. Arafat, in an interview with an Arab newspaper reprinted in Palestine Perspectives with emphasis being added by bold face type, stressed PLO support the international conference under United Nations auspices.¹⁴ On one point it was clear that PLO-Jordanian cooperation was working, for the PLO eventually nominated West Bank and Gaza representatives acceptable to the United States, which in fact meant acceptable by Israel as well, to begin a dialogue with the United States. Following this dialogue PLO would declare its formal acceptance of UN 242 and 338, culminating in formal United States recognition of the PLO as a party to negotiations. King Husayn, on the authorization of Arafat, issued a statement in Washington in May 1985 that the PLO had agreed to negotiate." On the basis of the pertinent UN resolutions, including Security Council Resolutions 242 and -----

13. Ibid.

14. "Arafat Interviewed on Jordanian-PLO Agreement," Palestine Perspectives (April 1985), p. 5.

338."15 According to Husayn, Arafat again reaffirmed this positions in a meeting in Amman on August 15, and this was again conveyed to the United States. Although the United States suspended talks on the composition of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, talks on international conference continued. In January 1986 the United States stated in writing that if the PLO should publicly (it had earlier said that this had to be in writing) state its acceptance of the two resolutions, renounce terrorism and be willing to negotiate peace with Israel, it would receive an invitation to the international conference. Prolonged discussions then ensued in Amman in late January and early February. According to the Jordanian account, the PLO declared that it would not accept UN 242 in an unamended form without prior approval of Palestinian self-determination in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.¹⁶ However, a senior adviser to Chairman Arafat explained that the PLO had offered to accept UN 242, in writing, with the proviso that this text would be released by the United Nations simultaneously with the American commitment to recognize Palestinian self determination and both declarations would then accompany the United Nations invitation to the international peace conference. This adviser, Professor Walid Khalidi, felt in his opinion that King Husayn was really upset with the PLO's position on self-determination and not over

15. "Hussein's February 19 Speech on the Peace Process," op. cit., Sec. 20.

16. Ibid., Sec. 28.

their position on UN 242, which had in fact accepted the substance of the Jordanian position.¹⁷

It was clear from King Husayn's speech reviewing the agreement with the PLO and its suspension, as well as from interviews given later, that the issue of self-determination was crucial to his decision. To Husayn, self-determination and confederation were matters for Jordan and the Palestinians to decide, not for the determination of an international conference. If the Palestinians had a worst case scenario for their relations with Jordan, it was the possibility that they would agree to negotiations led by Jordan which would then ignore the legitimate rights of the Palestinians in the restored territory in a confederation in name only, much like Jordan to 1967. King Husayn would get the credit for ending Israeli occupation while the PLO would get the blame for having sold out Palestinian self determination. A prior international, as opposed to a purely bilateral, recognition of Palestinian self determination led by the United States could not be so easily overturned by Jordan. But King Husayn had his own worst case scenario--an internationally recognized and guaranteed Palestinian state would have a more secure status than Jordan itself and would well claim to represent the Palestinian of the East Bank in addition, as they had attempted in 1970. "We agreed on everything. Then they came to talk of the issue of self-determination. In our dialogue with them we have not reached this degree of detail... We wished that they

17. Interview, Dr. Walid Khalidi, Cambridge, MA, 1987.

had said from the beginning: What is wanted is rule and not regaining territory."¹⁸

Jordanian distrust of the PLO returned to the fore, this time overlaid with the bitterness of wasted opportunities that might never return:

"We opened doors for them but they continued to move in empty circles... We wanted to get results for this problem before it was too late. We observe that every few years we regret that we have lost certain opportunities because we talk much and do little. The speech was intended to lead to the appearance of a Palestinian side which reacts to its cause in a responsible manner."¹⁹

18. "Al Siyasa Interviews King Husayn on Speech," Al Siyasa (Kuwait), 25 February 1986 interview published on 1 March, as reported in FBIS, 3 March 1986, p. F-1.

19. Ibid.

THE HASHEMITE-PLO STRUGGLE FOR THE WEST BANK

In 1986 and 1987, following King Husayn's February 19th speech giving the reasons for the suspension of political coordination with the PLO, the center of Palestinian-Jordanian relations shifted to a bitter contest for influence on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The King's speech has laid the blame for the breakdown of cooperation upon the leadership of the PLO. They had, according to him, gone back on their pledges to endorse the UN 242 and 338 resolutions at the critical juncture when such an endorsement would have earned them a seat at an international peace conference as part of a joint delegation with Jordan. King Husayn's attack on the PLO leaders reversed the major trend in their relations since the period of Camp David, a trend towards cautious but increasingly effective cooperation. They had both opposed Camp David and, as a result of the decision of the Baghdad Arab Summit of 1978, had jointly administered Arab funds to aid the occupied territories. This kind of cooperation had, as we have seen, important consequences in increased cooperation on the West Bank between pro-Jordanian and pro-PLO leaders. After a set-back in 1983, cooperation between King Husayn and Yasir Arafat resumed in 1984, leading to the holding of the 17th Session of the Palestine National Council in Amman in November and the signing of the Amman Accord in February of 1985. The level of cooperation included in the Amman Accord was really quite extensive, for it involved not only the short term objective of a negotiated peace with Israel through a joint negotiating team but

the long term objective of a confederation of Jordan and Palestine after Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories.

King Husayn wanted to make clear his view that his quarrel was with the PLO leadership, while the principles agreed to in the Amman Accord were still applicable. The PLO leadership's "word was not their bond" and they lacked "commitment, credibility and constancy"; however, "the principles and tenets" of the Amman Accord would, in his view "continue to embody the foundations governing the relations between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples with regard to equality of rights and obligations in facing our joint destiny."¹ In Jordan's view this "equality of rights and obligations," to which the PLO had agreed to in February 1985, meant that Jordan was now free to compete as a equal candidate for the endorsement of the Palestinian people. If the Palestinian leadership of the PLO has proved themselves to be untrustworthy and irresponsible, King Husayn could not in good conscience return the responsibility for the support of the people in the occupied territories and any hope of progress towards ending that occupation back to that same leadership. Instead, the matter of achieving peace based upon the Fez Arab Summit Resolution was turned over "to the Palestinian fora in the occupied territories and the diaspora as well as Arab capitals and organizations".² The implication of this statement was that it would be these fora, first of which being the occupied terri-

1. King Husssin's February 19 Speech with Peace Process," February 1986, op. cit., p. 27.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

tories, and not just the leadership of the PLO, who would be the ones to decide if the Jordanians...who shared equal rights and obligations and a joint destiny with the Palestinian people...should be the ones who decided to continue with the peace process even in the absense of the leaders of the PLO. Obviously, King Husayn felt fully in control of the Jordanian side. The PLO leadership controlled the Palestinian fora of the diaspora, but this control was not unchallenged either within the region or within the organization itself. The critical mass and deciding point in the struggle to represent the Palestinian people in the occupied territories would thus rest with the "Palestinian fora" within these territories, and King Husayn put himself forward as a candidate to lead these fora.

The problem, and from King Husayn's point of view also the opportunity, was that these fora inside the occupied territory existed only in a very rudimentary manner. It was true that the last open contest between Jordan and the PLO on the West Bank in the municipal elections of 1976 had ended in a humiliating defeat for the pro-Hashemites. Since then, however, there has been many developments within the occupied territories, in Israeli politics and policies, in the region and in Jordanian-Palestinian relations. By the Amman Accord, even if it was signed by Arafat in a moment of weakness in the PLO's position, the PLO had readmitted Jordan to a major role in peacemaking and in the future of the Palestinian people. Who could not believe, as the dispute in January-February 1986 over the meaning and timing of "self-determination" revealed, that Jordan would not strive to interpret the essence of "confederation" as the supremacy of Jordan? This was

just what the Palestinian critics of Arafat had pointed out as the fatal flaw of the agreement.

The situation on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip was substantially different from that of a decade before. There were virtually no organized "Palestinian fora" to speak of in the occupied territories due to a combination of the Sharon-Rabin "iron fist" and the internal dissensions in the PLO. Under the Amman Accord there had been an attempt to create a Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories through joint Jordanian-PLO efforts, but little had been accomplished. A few elite individuals had been identified as local candidates for inclusion in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to an international peace conference, but what was their political base? Nobody really knew, but it seems most likely that their political base lay in the fact that they had been found to be acceptable by two outside forces...Jordan and the PLO.

King Husayn felt that the "silent majority" in the occupied territories would see that his policies offered the only realistic hope of their ending the Israeli occupation. They would agree with him that the diaspora leadership of the PLO had become too self-centered and distant from the realities of Israeli pressures and that their "Jordanian brothers" were in a better position, being closer to the day-to-day realities of the occupation, to represent their interests.

In "the Arab capitals and organizations" the other critical fora to which King Husayn entrusted the fate of the Palestinians, he was aware of the fact that Arafat's prestige was none too

great. Although all Arab states paid lip-service to the Rabat Summit formula of the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people, few actually acted towards the PLO in this manner. Too often, the PLO was an embarrassment, distraction or even a danger to Arab rulers. Most desired an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the terms of the Fez Summit, which clearly implied UN 242 and the recognition of Israel. The paymasters of both Jordan and the PLO, the oil states of the Arabian peninsula and in particular Saudi Arabia, were much more worried about dangers from Iran than from Israel. In an era of declining oil demand and prices they also had little enough cash to spare from their own defense expenditures, their subsidization of the Iraqi war effort and the necessity of maintaining a high level of social and economic expenditures to which their people had become accustomed to over the previous decade. Even those states which did not really believe in the possibility of an Arab-Israeli peace settlement through negotiations, Syria and Libya, probably detested Arafat more than they disliked King Husayn. The Hashemites were the reactionary traditional lackies of the imperialists, but Arafat was a pseudo-revolutionary who had betrayed the revolution, sold out the Palestinian people, and had committed treason against the Arab nation. King Husayn might expect rhetoric sympathetic to the PLO from Arab capitals, but he might as well get substantial quiet support in private. The real opponents of negotiations would give him no help, but they would give Arafat even less.

As a practical matter and due to his habitual caution, King Husayn left himself--and Arafat--an escape clause. The Amman

Accord was merely suspended, not broken, and thus cooperation could be resumed when "their (the PLO leadership) word becomes their bond." Unlikely though this might be, it was not impossible. Arafat could respond to pressures and reverse his policies, as he had between April 1983 and February 1985, and return to cooperation with Jordan. Thus, in the contest for the support of the occupied territories it was not necessary to destroy the PLO there. Once the weight of opinion began to shift towards the Hashemites, Arafat would be forced to conform to the wishes of his principal constituency. Clearly, the politically active sentiment in the occupied territories preferred Jordanian-PLO cooperation.³ It made life easier on a day-to-day basis and it might be the most effective route towards ending the Israeli occupation. Even though Arafat, if he shifted back to cooperation with Jordan, would not be sincere, this would make little difference...provided the road to peace negotiations was already paved the momentum would be unstoppable. In 1986 and 1987 King Husayn began to put more and more hope on the convening of an international conference as a catalyst that would, by itself, create the necessary pressures from within the occupied territories to force Arafat to resume cooperation with Jordan on the basis of the Amman Accord. An actual invitation to such a conference, even though offered on Jordanian terms of a joint delegation and self-determination in the context of a confederation of Jordan and Palestine, could not be refused by the PLO.

3. Interview with a PLO official from the occupied territories, 1986.

Even should such a policy fail, in reality probably the most likely outcome due to Israeli intransigence, the immediate situation would be more favorable for Jordan. Even a failed peace effort, especially one based on a struggle with the PLO, would confirm Jordan's status with the Israeli Labor Party as the only possible Arab partner in negotiating a solution to the Palestinian problem. In the long term, and maybe even in the short term, Labor felt that Israel needed a solution to this issue for its own self interest and even survival. The demographic realities of the occupied territories and the policy of the Likud and Israeli far-right would lead to annexation and this in turn would lead to either an Israeli state with an Arab majority or to the forced expulsion of the Arabs. An Arab majority would mean the destruction of the original Zionist dream of the Jewish state to which Labor still adhered, while the expulsion of the Arabs would result in a war that would make previous Arab-Israeli wars look like picnics. Such a war would destroy, in one swoop, Israeli democracy, United States support, support of the world Jewish community and, possibly, the state of Israel itself. King Husayn thus had a very important and strategically located Israeli ally in the Labor Party. This party, until the fall of 1986 at least, controlled the prime ministership in the National Unity government and even after that, until 1988, it would control the Foreign Ministry as Shamir and Peres switched jobs. Perhaps even more importantly General Rabin, as Defense Minister, controlled the administration of the occupied territories and could be

expected to favor the building there of pro-Hashemite forces in opposition to the PLO supporters.

In the nearly two years between the suspension of the Amman Accord by King Husayn and the outbreak of the Palestinian intifadah (uprising) in December 1987, Jordanian policy developed a number of approaches to implement its aim of gaining influence in the Occupied Territories vis-a-vis the PLO. These specific approaches were, in turn, coordinated with other aspects of Jordanian domestic and foreign policy. Obviously, some of these policies would have been carried out for reasons of their own, but in the context of the on-going struggle with the PLO they took on added significance. Any enhancement of the regional or international influence of the Hashemite Kingdom had the additional benefit of reminding the Palestinian people that King Husayn, and not Yasir Arafat, could deliver them immediate benefits and was probably the only person who could deliver the end of Israeli occupation.

Of course, it would be a mistake to believe that everything went according to the Jordanian master-plan. The unaccustomed level of intensified political activity, especially on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, created counter policies of the PLO to frustrate Jordanian policies. As we have already noted, however, the contest was not completely a zero-sum game. The preferred outcome of the contest for Jordan, and probably for Arafat as well, remained the resumption of political coordination...though each felt that this coordination should be on their own terms. King Husayn and official Jordanian spokesmen stated that they considered the principles and tenets of the Amman

Accord as governing their relations with the Palestinian people and the PLO. It was only necessary for the PLO leadership to agree to the terms they had rejected in February 1986, acceptance of UN 242 and 338 and the realization of self-determination only in the context of a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, together with the mechanism of participation in an international conference under UN auspices in a joint delegation with Jordan, for political coordination to be resumed. For its part, the PLO leadership adopted a tone of injured innocence, denying that they had caused the break with King Husayn or had gone back on their word. They were thus willing to resume political coordination on their terms: non-acceptance of UN 242 and 338 apart from other United Nations resolutions dealing with Palestine, and the attainment of internationally recognized self-determination prior to a confederation with Jordan. Even as late as October 1986, following the expulsion of Fatah offices from Amman, Arafat could plaintively complain to an Egyptian editor: "The Jordanian-Palestinian agreement still exists, at least so far as the Palestinians are concerned. Only the Palestine National Council is entitled to abrogate this accord... King Husayn's decision to suspend the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement came as a surprise to us. We strived to keep our reaction on calm, but the Jordanian Government was under pressure to take tougher measures."4

4. "MENA Cities Arafat Interview with Uktubar," quoting an interview in Uktubar (Cairo), to be published 19 Oct 1986, as reported in FBIS, 21 Oct 1986, p. A-4.

Similar feelings were echoed by pro-PLO opinion on the West Bank. Hanna Sinyurah, the editor of Al Fajr (Jerusalem) and one of the two Palestinians approved by Israel, the United States and Jordan (and, in fact, nominated by the PLO) to participate in a Palestinian-United States dialogue, visited the United States in March 1986. He met there with State Department officials, including Assistant Secretary Richard Murphy. When he was asked in a Washington interview by an Arab newspaper regarding the Amman Accord he answered that the Palestinian people, particularly those in the Occupied Territories, had already given their opinion that Resolutions 242 and 338 without self-determination were unacceptable, but ... "co-operation and coordination with Jordan on an equal footing are the most important accomplishment achieved by both sides...The PLO has been wise and vigilant in its response to the king's speech. It has not torpedoed the bridges because Arab cooperation is the most important essential of the Palestinian action."5

The Jordanian campaign to replace PLO influence on the West Bank and Gaza Strip was characterized by its comprehensiveness. The traditional tools of Jordanian influence on the West Bank, represented by visits of mayors, ex-mayors, notables, members of the Jordanian parliament, etc., were reinforced by new and direct appeals to ordinary citizens. New radio and television broadcasts were aimed at the occupied territories featuring interviews with Jordanian officials and some pro-Jordanian residents of the -----

5. "West Bank Leader Queried on Israeli, Jordan Talks," Al-Majallah (London, 9-15 April 1986, pp. 26-27, as reported in FBIS, 18 April 1986, p. A-2.

territories (such as ex-mayor al-Shawwa of Gaza). These officials announced what steps Jordan was taking, and planning to take, to support the "steadfastness" of the Palestinian brothers--restrictions and duties on agricultural and manufactured goods exported to Jordan were lowered, and entry formalities simplified.

The centerpiece, however, of the Jordanian campaign was a five year plan for the development of the occupied territories calling for the expenditure of 362.5 million Jordanian Dinars, or about 1 billion US dollars. In contrast to previous aid given to individual projects and towns, which amounted to something between a bribe and charity, the new plan was for comprehensive development of the resources of the occupied territories to create jobs and other economic resources to keep the people on the land. It was clear that these promised economic benefits depended on the acceptance of Jordanian political and economic leadership as well. The funds were to be administered by Arab mayors, nominated by Jordan but appointed by the Israelis. The funds would be transferred through the re-opened branches of a Jordanian bank, whose opening, of course, had to be approved of by Israel. The first of the new Arab mayors, replacing Israeli officials appointed after the dismissal of the elected Palestinian mayors in the early 1980s, was Zafir al-Masri of Nablus. He had actually applied for the appointment in November, 1985 with the approval of both Arafat and King Husayn during their cooperation under the Amman Accord. But al-Masri was soon assassinated in March 1986, a deed which was blamed on the "Zionists." His

funeral became the occasion of anti-Hashemite demonstrations in which King Husayn's photographs were burned. A year later, the Israelis announced that they had captured the hit-team that had carried out this assassination, and other assassinations, on the orders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Despite some understandable reluctance on the part of others to come forward, eventually more Jordanian nominated mayors were appointed. Along with these appointments came the "de-recognition" of the former mayors by Jordanian authorities. These pro-PLO ex-officials, although they were not allowed to function in office by the Israeli authorities, still maintained political influence by being recognized by Jordan, which gave them the right to be consulted by Amman on projects and developments in their towns and to be used as intermediaries for their constituents in dealings with Amman authorities when in Jordan. In order to operate and supervise the plan, it was announced that eight regional committees, composed of pre-1967 Jordanian officials from the territories and "private sector individuals" had been formed.⁶

To reinforce these economic and political measures, more direct support was organized. The weekly newspaper An-Nahar, subsidized by Jordan, became a daily and the leading media voice of Jordanian policy in the occupied territories. It was published in East Jerusalem. Another group identified as "The Preparatory Committee of the Jordanian-Palestinian Grouping,"

6. "Dudin Discusses 5 Year West Bank Project," Jordan Times (Amman), 10 March 1986, p. 1, as reported by FBIS, 11 March 1986, p. F-1.

identified in Israeli sources as "municipal leaders, business men and academics from rural areas of Judea and Samaria" issued statements. Its leader was identified as Jamil al'Amlah, a former leader of the Israeli-inspired "village leagues" and then mayor of the village of Baytillu near Hebron. Al 'Amlah said that his group had not yet received recognition from Jordan, as it had previously strongly opposed the village leagues. Now, however, al-'Amlah hoped for Jordanian support. "We believe with King Husayn, and we know exactly our problem. . .only King Husayn will finish our problem."⁷ Some even more ephemeral groups made their presence known by leaflets, such as "The West Bank Labor Movement of Support of the PLO," which advocated cooperation with the Jordanian development plan and the resumption of PLO-Jordanian cooperation based on the Amman Accord and could have been written (and probably were) by the Jordanian security services.⁸

The distance King Husayn would have to travel to be acceptable as the political leader of the occupied territories by their inhabitants was made emphatically clear in a secretly conducted public opinion poll in the summer of 1986. Devised and supervised by American and Palestinian professors teaching at al-Najlah University, and financially supported by Newsday (Long Island), New York, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and -----

7. "Pro-Jordanian Movement Toward in Territories," Radio Jerusalem, Domestic in Hebrew, 16 August 1986, as reported in FBIS, 12 August 1987, p. L-3.

8. "West Bank Labor Movement Pamphlets Support PLO," An Nahar (Jerusalem), 12 October 1986, as reported in FBIS, 22 October 1986, p. I-2.

al-Fajr (Jerusalem), the poll was published by al-Fajr and its other sponsors. It was substantially elaborated on by its authors in The Middle East Journal in 1988.⁹ The results were clearly disturbing to Jordan and Israel and encouraging to the PLO . Its findings were widely reported in the foreign press as well. Israel showed its displeasure by refusing to renew the work permits of the professors and closing al-Fajr for two weeks. In Amman, Jordanian officials and the press attacked the poll as "unscientific" and part of a Zionist plot to show that the Palestinians could not be trusted to govern themselves.

The questions getting most attention were those dealing with representation and leadership of the people. Despite King Husayn's appeal for the people to repudiate the current leadership of the PLO, 72.5 percent supported this leadership while only 3.3 percent opted for King Husayn as their leader. . . a lower percentage than those who supported the more radical Damascus-based PLO opponents of Arafat (4.9 percent). King Husayn's highest percentages of support were among the illiterate (10.8 percent) and those over 40 years of age (9.8 percent).

However, there were other interesting responses that could not have pleased the PLO leadership and which were, in fact, seized upon by Israelis opposed to returning any territory. Less than a majority (49.7 percent) favored, even as an interim solution, the official PLO (and Arab Fez Summit) policy of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while 43.2 percent

9. Mohammed Shadid and Rick Seltzer, "Political Attitudes of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," The Middle East Journal, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Winston 1988), pp. 16-32.

avored the policy of the anti-Arafat factions of the PLO to continue the struggle for a democratic state in all of Palestine. Only 6.3 percent favored the interim solution of the return of Jordanian rule. Also disturbing, and foreshadowing the intifadah of a year and a half later, was a clear majority in favor of armed struggle as the most effective tactic for solving the Palestinian issue. A considerable number (36.9 percent) even favored such attacks as those carried out by the Abu Nidal group (Fatah Revolutionary Council) on civilians at the Rome and Vienna airports in 1985. As to the long term future of Palestine after independence, there was considerable support for the Islamic alternative of a state based on the Shariat (26.5 percent), while another large group called for a state based upon "Arab nationalism and Islam" (29.6 percent). A clear conclusion of the survey as a whole was the fact that the inhabitants of the occupied territories were much more radical than the official leadership of the PLO, even though they continued to endorse this leadership. According to the authors of the survey: "If no political solution is achieved in the near future, however, the PLO leadership will have to move to the left or lose popular support. If the current leadership loses popular support, the new leadership might well be far more radical."¹⁰

King Husayn's "silent majority" had found its voice, but its message was not what he wanted to hear. On the other hand, King Husayn's analysis of the building pressures on the West Bank and

10. Ibid., pp. 31-32.

Gaza Strip leading to the condition where rapid changes must occur was, in fact, more in tune with the sentiment there than the more leisurely pace of PLO political action. Also, the poll had been taken at a time of maximum tension between the PLO and the Hashemites, so the question of that kind of support there might be for a joint initiative of King Husayn and Arafat under the Amman Accords was not asked. Also unaddressed was the fact that King Husayn as yet had nothing concrete to offer; any Israeli withdrawals from any of the occupied territories were still highly speculative. Most Palestinians, in all probability, didn't think that Israel would withdraw at all, despite the hints of Shimon Peres.

If Hashemite prospects on the West Bank were still quite limited and, in the best of circumstances, would still take some time to mature, they retained the power to take significant actions against the PLO on the East Bank which would, it was hoped, eventually have repercussions on the occupied territories. These, in turn, would pressure on the PLO leadership to resume a more cooperative stance. In July, 1986, ostensibly in retaliation for a critical statement from the Fatah Council, Jordan closed a number of PLO offices in Amman which had been allowed to open in the two years since the 17th PNC meeting in Amman. The Jordanians claimed that this did not affect their official relations with the PLO or their recognition of that organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, for these were not offices of the PLO but were offices of one of the PLO's constituent parties...Fatah. Of course, this was a distinction without a difference. Abu Jihad (Khalid al-Wazir) was

th a high official of Fatah and the head of the military arm of the PLO as a whole. When he was expelled from Amman on a few hours notice it undoubtedly affected the mission of the PLO. The establishment of these offices had been one of the chief attractions of the Amman Accord for the PLO, for it made it much easier for them to maintain political and military contact with their supporters and agents in the occupied territories...superior to Beirut before 1982 and far superior to Tunis.

The Israelis, of course, were well aware of the function of these Amman offices. There had been a number of scarcely veiled warnings to Amman over the previous two years over the build up of "terrorist" organizations on Jordanian soil. Now, there was great rejoicing in Israel when the offices were closed and increased discreet cooperation with Jordan to undermine the PLO supporters in the occupied territories. Defense Minister Rabin was able to claim that his policy against terrorism was succeeding:

"King Husayn has partially come off the fence. . .It is clear to me that without Jordan, there can be no local leadership. With Jordan, we are currently creating an infrastructure upon which we can hope to build a better future. Jordan is not yet ready for direct negotiations, but there is no denying that new found ground is being laid. Now that Jordan and Israel have almost the same policies regarding the areas, I see a chance for change in the

territories."¹¹

By December 1987, Rabin was able to hold an unprecedented meeting with virtually all of the West Bank members of the Jordanian parliament. He urged them to "strengthen pro-Jordanian elements in the territories" and promised that "Israel would continue to support and strengthen the moderate personalities."

Although general and practical problems were discussed, such as agricultural exports to Europe, so was the sensitive matter of an international conference on Palestine. "The participation of the PLO in such a conference was not raised at all."¹² Although the significance of such views representing widespread popular opinion in the occupied territories was, to say the least, debatable (it was only a week before the outbreak of the intifadah, they are very significant as an indication of Jordanian policy. Such a meeting would have been inconceivable without prior approval of King Husayn. The king was confident enough of his position that he was willing to sanction such a meeting. The message to the PLO and their supporters that Jordan was confident enough in the wake of the Arab Summit meeting in Amman in November 1987, which Rabin correctly described as having pushed the Palestinian issue to the sidelines, that he would go ahead with international negotiations sanctioned by the Amman Summit and the

11. "Rabin on Cooperation with Jordan, U.S. Aid," The Jerusalem Post Magazine, 3 October 1986, p. 6, as reported in FBIS, 6 October 1986, p. I-8.

12. "Rabin Meets With Jordanian Parliamentarians," Radio Jerusalem in Hebrew, 3 December 1987, as reported in FBIS, 8 December 1987, p. 27.

PLO would have to catch up if it didn't want to be left out of the picture completely.

In the contest over the West Bank, each side had indirect as well as direct methods of attack. Each attempted to undermine the other's home base of support. For his part, King Husayn allowed the operations of an anti-Arafat PLO official, Atallah Atallah (Abu Za'im, to use his PLO nom de guerre) with his "Corrective Movement in Fatah and the PLO." Although Jordan never officially recognized Abu Za'im as the alternative to the PLO's leadership based in Tunis, he was allowed to conduct rallies and deliver well-reported speeches to Palestinian refugee groups that could have never been attempted without the cooperation of the Jordanian security services. Thus, on the eve of the Amman Arab summit of November 1987, Abu Za'im addressed a rally of reportedly 30,000 announcing. . ."by the support of the masses of our people in the occupied territory, in Jordan, and elsewhere, this .movement has become the PLO...Arafat does not represent us."¹³ It was reported in a Gulf newspaper that Abu Za'im had sent a letter to Shimon Peres stating his availability to join a Palestinian peace delegation and his wish to be allowed to open offices in the occupied territories."¹⁴ Although not claiming to be the authentic leadership of the PLO, Brigadier General Na'im al-Khatib, the commander of the Palestine Liberation Army's -----

13. "Fatah's Atallah Addresses Rally in Amman Camp," Al-Quds (Amman), 2 November 1987, pp. 1 and 16, as reported in FBIS, 6 November 1987, pp. 2-3.

14. "Atallah Ready to Participate in Direct Talks," Al-Itlihad (Abn Dhabi), 9 May 1987, p. 1, as reported by FBIS, 12 May 1987, p. p.-5.

"Badr Forces" (the PLO's regular army troops stationed in Jordan) made it clear that he supported the Amman Accords: "I am speaking in my name and on behalf of every member of these forces, we will not allow anyone to break up this unity or the Amman agreement...Why did King Husayn suspend coordination? I believe this was caused by the fact that the Palestinian command failed to implement the Amman agreement in view of Palestinian differences."¹⁵

It is doubtful that King Husayn actually hoped to unseat Arafat within the structure of the PLO by someone like Abu Za'im, but when combined with other rival factions of the PLO, including the Syrian-controlled Fatah rebels of Abu Musa, such movements tended to undermine and pressure Arafat from all sides. In addition, underlying all of these movements was a widespread distrust of Arafat's personal style, shifting policies and lack of organization. Although these differences could usually be papered-over in the name of organizational solidarity, they extended into the inner circle of Fatah itself.¹⁶ At the very least, support for some of these dissidents had some effect among the Jordanian-Palestinians in making the dispute between King Husayn and Yasir Arafat less of conflict of basic rights and interests between Jordan and Palestine.

15. "Army Chief Rejects Abrogators of Amman Accord," Al-Anba (Kuwait), 7 April 1987, as reported in FBIS, 13 April 1987, p. A-4.

16. Interviews with PLO officials, 1986-87.

The efficiency of the Jordanian security services made it much more difficult for the PLO to undermine the Jordanian regime on its own territory. However, on the West Bank, aside from dramatic incidents such as the assassination of Zafir al-Masri (which was not claimed by the PLO) there were periodic anti-Hashemite riots, particularly among students, and leaflets appeared calling for the overthrow of the Hashemite regime in Jordan. The arrests of Palestinian activists, communists and nationalists in Jordan became the basis for protests on the West Bank. In at least one case, rioting at Yarmuk University in Irbid in May 1986 leading to the death of at least three students, there was a direct conflict between the students (largely Palestinian and many from the West Bank) and the security services. When the PLO's offices in Amman were closed in July, this incident was not officially cited in the government's statement. However, King Husayn at a subsequent press conference cited these riots and the provision of funds from the PLO to a Muslim activist candidate in a by-election in Irbid as instances of PLO interference in Jordanian internal politics. The king charged in speaking to foreign correspondents that Fatah has engaged in "an unholy alliance" with both the Muslim Brotherhood and the Communist Party.¹⁷

Both the PLO and Jordan competed on a wider international

17. Mary Curtius, "Hussein Decries Arab Disarray, PLO," The Christian Science Monitor, 16 July 1986, pp. 1 and 28, see also reported by Curtis Wilkes of the King's descriptions of an "unholy alliance" of muslim Brethern and Communists, The Boston Globe, July 16, 1986, and William Claiborne, The Washington Post, July 16, 1986. All of these reports have the direct quotation from King Husayn regarding the "unholy alliance."

and Arab stage as well, but the PLO was hampered by the need to unify its own organization first. This proved to be difficult and involved a number of foreign intermediaries, including Algeria, Libya, and the Soviet Union. The process of the reunification of the major factions of the PLO lasted for more than a year following the speech of King Husayn in February 1986. Finally, in April 1987 the 18th Meeting of the Palestine National Council was held in Algiers. It was still impossible, however, to include the Syrian controlled factions based in Damascus. But the most important non-Fatah parties. . .George Habbash's DFLP and Nayef Hawateymah's DFLP. . . did rejoin the Arafat-led PLO. The Communist Party of Palestine joined as well and while the Muslim Brethren was not formally represented, there were contacts with them too.

A major issue in the reunification talks had been the status of the Amman Agreement of February 1985. Arafat's opponents had made the formal abrogation of this agreement as a condition for their participation in the PNC and eventually Arafat conceded this point. On the eve of the opening of the 18th PNC the PLO Executive Committee formally repudiated the Amman Accords in a meeting involving eight Palestinian groups. However, Arafat's opponents had to concede that the 17th PNC held in Amman in November 1984 had been a legitimate meeting, despite their boycott. In fact, as everyone knew, the Amman Accords had been frozen since February 1986 at King Husayn's initiative; their formal abrogation at Algiers was an insignificant concession that Arafat had held in his pocket until it could be produced as his

concession to PLO unity. Both Jordan and the PLO took the repudiation of the Amman Accords in good spirit. The PNC stated its own interpretation of their relations with Jordan in "Special Resolution Number Six," which essentially restated their interpretation of the Amman Accords without naming them directly. These relations included a joint struggle against Zionist expansion aimed at Jordan and the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It further reaffirmed that "any future relationship with Jordan should be based on a confederate basis between two independent states."¹⁸

A revealing glimpse into the inner workings of the PLO regarding the Amman Accords was given at this time by Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) in a interview in Al-Mustaqbal (Paris):

"As for me, everyone knows that I opposed and attacked the agreement because I viewed it as the relinquishment of half of our right to represent the Palestinian people. But I kept silent when I knew we were required to relinquish everything and cancel our entity. Therefore, there have been terrible political, military, and material pressures and plans against the PLO chairman not only from Israel and the United States but also from Arabs. But when were asked to accept Security Council Resolution 242 and to relinquish everything, we refused to respond or even relinquish half our

18. "Eighteenth Session of the Palestine National Council held in Algiers, April 20-26, 1987, Text" American-Arab Affairs, No. 21 (Summer 1987), p. 157.

right to representation."¹⁹

At the very time Abu Iyad was speaking, Jordan was pursuing alternative approaches to a political solution based on UN 242 and 338. Amman replied to the PLO's 's abrogation of the Amman Accords by saying that this would not influence it to change its policy. This policy continued to regard the Amman Accords as "the beacon guiding Jordan in its serious, continuous efforts on the pan-Arab, and international levels to liberate occupied Palestinian territory and enable the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights. . .It will not allow the Executive Committee's decision to be an obstacle to Arab efforts to reach a just and peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict."²⁰ The focus of these efforts continued to be the convening of an international conference at the invitation of the United Nations' Secretary General based upon UN 242 and 338, consisting of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties involved in the dispute. It hoped, through negotiations to lay the groundwork for the participation of the PLO as the Palestinian people's representative.

Simultaneously with his campaign against PLO influence in the occupied territories, King Husayn pursued two parallel tracks of international negotiations in 1986 and 1987, with the ultimate aim of convening a general international peace conference on the -----

19. "Fatah's Khalaf on Dialogue Issues," Al Mustaqbal (Paris), 11 April 1987, pp. 22-23, as reported in FBIS, 14 April 1987, p. A-4.

20. "Government Views PLO Abrogations of Amman Accord," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, 21 April 1987, as reported in FBIS, 21 April 1987, p. F-1.

Arab-Israeli conflict. One track featured direct secret negotiations with Israel as well as open negotiations with the United States, the Soviet Union and other interested parties, such as the British and French. The second track was within the Arab world to unify the Arab states to the extent that an Arab Summit could be held which could, it was hoped, adopt a common approach to a political settlement. The holding of an Arab Summit in Amman would, by itself, be a significant coup for Husyan, consolidating his role as the senior statesman of the Arab world.

There were, to be sure, sufficient reasons. . .even apart from the Arab-Israeli conflict. . .to have such a meeting. First of all, there was the danger from the Iran-Iraq War, then reaching its military crisis. Then there was the continuing civil war in Lebanon and the bitter disputes between Syria and Iraq, each contributing to the perpetuation of the Palestine conflict. In the end, King Husayn hoped that a settlement of these intra-Arab conflicts would lead to a political approach to negotiations with Israel in the context of an international conference under United Nations auspices. This would face the PLO with the choice of either accepting Jordanian terms of UN 242 if it wished to participate or becoming irrelevant to the settlement. One might dispute the possibility that the PLO could become irrelevant to the settlement of the Palestine problem but, in fact, it had already become marginal in the Arab world as a whole following its ouster from Lebanon by the Israelis and Syrians. Arafat had been forced to enter into his alliance with King Husayan in February 1985 (and in the words of Abu Iyad, give up half of

Palestinian representation) to regain even a subordinate role in the peace process, as well as to be able to maintain contact with his principal Palestinian constituency in the occupied territories. The adoption of this political stance further alienated the radical-messianic elements of the PLO as well as Syria, which feared that a Hashemite-PLO settlement with Israel would leave out Syrian interests in the Golan. Arafat's chief remaining asset was the official Arab endorsement of the PLO's status as "the sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people granted at Rabat in 1974. But should this recognition be withdrawn, even if in a de facto manner, by making it conditional upon his entering into an international conference on the basis of UN 242, the veto power given to the PLO over a political settlement might be withdrawn.

Most indications are that King Husayn felt that Arafat would be pressured back into political coordination with Jordan under a renewed Amman Accords--as interpreted by Jordan. Thus, there was the surprisingly restrained reaction in Amman to the formal abrogation of these accords at the Algiers 18th meeting of the PNC. The prominent Israeli journalist Wolf Blitzer, normally the Washington correspondent of The Jerusalem Post, reported from Amman that top Jordanian officials still believed they could cooperate in the peace process with Chairman Arafat, despite the action of the PLO's Executive Committee. He reported that these officials "welcomed Foreign Minister Simon Peres's readiness to participate in an international conference. . . Peres was even more forthcoming and flexible on this issue than Secretary of

State George Shultz and other United States officials."²¹

It was clear that Arafat's own views were not too different, as these were reported in an interview by a British journalist in Tunis:

"No doubt there is now a consensus for the international conference, which has been accepted at all international levels...For the first time the American Administration has accepted it in principle, also a part of the Israelis--the Labour Party...It is true that they are looking for their international conference, not our international conference, but that's all part of the game."²²

To get around his break with King Husayn, which he believed to have been caused by Israeli and American pressure, he could join in a united Arab delegation to the international conference. Even the obvious attempts of Jordan, Egypt and the Israelis to find alternative Palestinian leadership to participate in an international conference was given a favorable interpretation; it proved that the Israelis "know in the back of their minds that they can't bypass the Palestinians." The ultimate goal must still be a confederation of Jordan and Palestine because..."we have a privileged relationship with the Jordanian people."²³

21. Wolf Blitzer, "Jordan Determined on Conference Despite PNC," The Jerusalem Post, 22 April 1987, pp. 1 and 10, as reported in FBIS, 22 April 1987, p. I-2.

22. Andrew Gowers, "Arafat Interviewed on PLO Issues, Israel," The Financial Times (London), 7 September 1987, p. 15, as reported in FBIS, 17 September 1987, p. 3.

23. Ibid..

INTIFADAH: THE PALESTINIAN DIMENSION

"I do not have the same sense of responsibility for them that I do for my own subjects. They never were, not even between 1950 and 1970, when the territory east and west of Jordan was united in a single state".¹

H.M. King Husayn ibn Talal

A. Significance for Jordan

King Husayn was one of the first Middle Eastern or external actors to grasp the implications of the Palestinian uprising that began in Gaza in early December and spread rapidly throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Although his formal disengagement decision from the claims to sovereignty over the occupied Jordanian territories lost in 1967 did not come until July 1988, this drastic strategic change was foreshadowed as early as the interview, from which the quotation above was taken, in January. As we have already noted, King Husayn's policy towards the Palestinians divided them into three groups. The first of these, the Jordanian-Palestinians of the East Bank, were the most important for Jordanian security and the survival of the Hashemite monarchy. The second group consisted of the Palestinians of the diaspora, whose politically active segments had given their support to the PLO. Finally, there were the Palestinians of the occupied territories of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. It was this latter group that became the focus of cooperation and competition between the PLO and Jordan in the 1970s and 1980s.

1. "King Husayn Comments on Uprising, Peace Process," Interview in Der Spiegel (Hamburg), 1 February 1988, pp. 125-29, as reported in FBIS, 3 February 1988, p. 30.

It was a focus of interests because both the PLO and the Hashemites regarded the people of the occupied territories as instrumental to larger concerns vital to their very survival. The PLO, of course, was divided between those who sought the maximum objective of regaining all of Palestine, which was enshrined in their Charter, and those who has accepted the lesser objective of a mini-state in the territories occupied in 1967 following an Israeli withdrawal. This latter option, provided that it included all the territories lost, including East Jerusalem, and provided for a sovereign Palestinian state, became the official policy of the PLO led by Arafat and was endorsed by the Arab summits in Fez in 1982 and Amman in 1987. Whether this was to be a final or an interim solution was still not clear; statements of PLO leaders could be cited on either side. What was clear was the fact that this official "minimalist" PLO policy was the only one which could obtain the endorsement of the Arab states and the USSR, even if it did not have the approval of the United States or Israel.

Even this minimalist policy faced formidable obstacles to its realization; first and foremost being Israel. With the exception of a few politically and numerically inconsequential groups, the entire spectrum of Israeli politics and public opinion utterly rejected the idea of a sovereign Palestinian state on the West Bank, much less a state run by the PLO. To them, the PLO was merely a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people, which could only be dealt with by force. The realistic choice in Israeli politics was between the

Labor and Likud options for the occupied territories and both of these involved Jordan.

Likud's policy was heavily influenced by its ideological roots in Zionist revisionism as well as by its views of Israeli security needs. On both grounds, it rejected any territorial concessions in the de facto situation obtained as a result of the 1967 War and the 1978 Camp David negotiations. After withdrawal from the Sinai, any further withdrawals would mean relinquishment of part of the sacred Land of Israel. The policy regarding the Arab inhabitants of the territories had its own maximalist and minimalist divisions. The official Likud position was former prime minister Begin's "autonomy plan". This held that there could be no compromise on borders or sovereignty and the aim of gradually settling Jews in the territories, but the Arab inhabitants could remain as guests, or poor relations, provided that they accept the fact that autonomy related solely to their personal status and purely local government, and not to any political rights. In fact, they would lose their status in international law as inhabitants of occupied territory and would not gain the status of Israeli Arabs, which was in theory that of full citizenship.

The maximalist Likud position was associated in particular with Ariel Sharon. Like the maximalist position within the PLO, it was probably a minority but a very important position nevertheless, since it represented the deeply held views of extremist Zionist ideology as well as presenting a logical security policy for those who believed that the Arab-Israeli conflict was a zero-sum game. This view held that the bulk of the inconvenient Arab

population could be induced to leave by pressure and, ultimately, be expelled by force if necessary. Their Palestinian national ambitions could be satisfied by the establishment of a Palestinian state on the East Bank of the Jordan in place of the obsolete and "foreign" (since it had originated in the Hejaz) Hashemite regime. Jordan was already the only state in the world with a Palestinian majority. The Hashemites there could follow in the footsteps of their Iraqi cousins into oblivion. This new Palestinian state would be nothing more than an Israeli satellite, much like the regime that Sharon attempted to establish in Lebanon and could present no security threat to Israel.

Labor's position on the occupied territories and their inhabitants stemmed from their understanding of Zionism which emphasized the People of Israel over the Land of Israel. It also had a secular, democratic and socialist heritage from its European background. For Labor, as for Likud, the problem of the occupied territories lay in the fact that there were too many Arabs there, but the autonomy plan of Begin and Shamir was, at best, merely a temporary solution to this problem. It was impossible for a democracy to have two kinds of inhabitants--those who had political rights and those who did not. This was all the more true when one realized that the demographic facts would turn the Arab minority of Eretz Israel into an Arab majority in a generation or two. Autonomy would thus be an "apartheid" solution as in South Africa and would not be supported by Israel's friends and allies. Labor thus favored its "Jordanian option" of the return of the major areas of heavy Arab population to Jordanian

sovereignty, while keeping strategically valuable positions for security reasons in a new partition of Palestine. The demographic basis of Labor's argument could be seen in the fact that it wanted to give the Gaza strip, which had never been under Jordanian control, to Jordan as well as parts of the West Bank. In a larger sense, Israeli security would be guaranteed by the self interest of the Hashemites, who had demonstrated in 1970-71 that they knew how to handle challenges to their rule from Palestinians. The Labor position had the advantage of being more realistic in its assessment of the international situation, for it could be implemented through the internationally sanctioned mechanism of a conference based upon the UN 242 and 338 resolutions. In this way it conformed in process but not in outcome to the minimalist position endorsed by the Arab summits.

If the PLO did not exist, or if it could be ignored, King Husayn's preferred solution would be to get as much territory as he could from the Labor position, just as his grandfather King Abdullah had gotten as much as he could in negotiations with Ben Gurion in 1948-49. The improbable and artificial Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan had not existed in the Middle East for nearly seventy years by being ruled by romantics. Abdullah and Husayn were both realists with a keen appreciation of international politics and Zionism. As much as he would have liked to ignore the role of the PLO, the fact remained that this was a reality endorsed by pan-Arab consensus. To accept some version of the Labor "Jordanian option" thus required the cooperation of Yasir Arafat. It was impossible for Jordan to go it alone in a bilateral deal with an Israeli Labor government, at least for anything

ess then complete withdrawal from every inch of occupied territory...hardly a likely prospect.

It was also impossible for King Husayn to wash his hands of the occupied territories and concentrate on governing and improving his existing kingdom on the East Bank, although this was a course urged upon him by a number of his East Bank advisers, including his brother Crown Prince Hassan. The king's continued assertion of Jordanian legal sovereignty over the West Bank and his genuine concern for the plight of its inhabitants was an important political asset, even if it could not be implemented in practice. Certainly, even the most contented, well-integrated and upwardly mobile Jordanian-Palestinian of the East Bank felt a deep sense of kinship and sympathy for his brethren in the occupied territories. In many cases these "brethren" were also literally brothers, families divided between the Hashemite Kingdom and Israeli occupation. To wash his hands of these people would seem to demonstrate an indifference to their fate. This would be a shameful, humiliating and dishonorable course unworthy of his family or his character, and especially so since it was his decision to go to war in 1967 that had put them in their present state. In the long-run, the internal political stability of Jordan could not survive such a decision which would bring out the latent divisions between the Jordanian-Palestinians and the native East Bank population.

This disastrous consequence of a total disengagement from the Palestine issue would soon be evident in the international and regional arenas as well. Jordan's prosperity and even its very existence had depended on the good will, and the monetary

subsidies, of major Arab oil states. Such subsidies would be hard to find for a "frontline" state which, seemingly, had opted-out of the Palestine conflict. As for the Israeli enemy and its American ally, the position of Jordan as a potential recipient of at least part of Palestinian territory and population in a settlement gave it a special international status. This led, in turn, to American military and economic aid and to the Labor Alignment's policy of keeping the Hashemite regime in being so that one day it could implement its "Jordanian option". This was vital consideration, since American and Labor support for their Jordanian option served to restrain Ariel Sharon's version of Jordan as the Palestinian state.

Jordan's Palestine policy in the 1980s had been governed by an inescapable fundamental reality. This was the fact that the trend in the treatment of the occupied territories by Israel was working against the accidental, unfortunate, but still tolerable status quo existing since 1967. Despite the check brought about through the indecisive war in Lebanon and the consequent drop in Sharon's prestige, the trend was clearly in favor of the Likud policy. From Jordan's point of view, Begin's and Shamir's autonomy plan was merely a slower version of Sharon's rapid transformation of Jordan into the Palestinian state, for it was autonomy coupled with Israeli settlements, land and water confiscations. These would, ultimately, put enough pressure on the inhabitants of the occupied territories to leave, and most of them would leave for Jordan. However, the Lebanon War did produce a window of opportunity as a result of the elections of 1984 in Israel

which put Shimon Peres back in the prime ministership, even though this was in a National Unity Coalition with Likud and was to last for only two years. This was the first opening since Likud's ouster of Labor in the decisive election of 1977 for a realistic chance for negotiations based on UN 242 and 338.

King Husayn's urgent need after 1984 was to obtain Arafat's cooperation in such a policy while this window remained open. This was accomplished in the Amman Accords of February 1985, but by the time that negotiations seemed (at least in King Husayn's view) to be imminent in early 1986 Arafat stood firm on the PLO's minimal program...that Palestinian self-determination meant an independent state that would then seek confederation with Jordan.

Although the direction of the intifadah and the identity of its leadership was at first unclear, two facts were perfectly clear from the beginning. One of these was the fact that the segment of the Palestinian people under foreign occupation had demonstrated that it would play a leading role in the debate over the future of Palestine. After the twenty year long bitter contest between the Hashemites and the PLO as to which one should speak for the Palestinians of the occupied territories, it had become evident that these Palestinians wished to speak for themselves. Thus, the center of gravity of the Palestinians struggle for freedom, which before had moved from Damascus, Amman, Beirut and Tunis now shifted to Gaza, Nablus, Hebron, Jerusalem and to hundreds of previously anonymous villages and refugee camps in the occupied territories. Despite the fact that the intifadah soon declared its allegiance to the external leadership of the PLO, particularly to Arafat and to Abu Jihad, it necessarily had

an independent existence due to the fact of Israeli control. Located as it was on the front line of confrontation with Israel and dedicated to an active policy of resistance and institution-building, it could only be subordinated in a general manner to the PLO's formula of the organization being "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." For the first time in fifty years, since the British suppression of the Palestinian uprising in the mandate from 1936 to 1939, the masses of the ordinary people had taken the forefront of the struggle and their leaders has to hasten to catch up. This popular, universal and mass nature of the intifadah formed the second inescapable fact which shaped Jordanian reactions to it.

Taken together, these two characteristics of the intifadah had both positive and negative potentialities for Jordanian interests, but it was clear that a major readjustment of policy was needed. The positive aspect stemmed from the fact that the Palestinian struggle was now centered on the issue of the liberation of the occupied territories. This viewpoint, in fact, had been consistent with Jordanian policy since 1967. If the interests of the people in the occupied territories in gaining freedom from Israeli occupation became paramount, the conflict became capable of negotiation with at least some of the Israeli leaders. However, if the maximalist and messianic views of the radical wing of the PLO were to prevail, views which rejected the idea of a Palestinian mini-state on the West Bank and Gaza in favor of an armed struggle for all of Palestine, there would be nothing to negotiate with the Israelis. Instead, the hard-line Zionist

extremist views would be reinforced. It goes without saying that these views were the most dangerous to the very existence of the Hashemite state--for they called for Jordan to become the alternative homeland for the Palestinians. Another equally dangerous consequence of the radical PLO views might be a repetition of the scenario of 1968-1970, with their attempt to take over Jordan as the base for the military liberation of Palestine. Thus, the essence of Jordanian policy in the 1980s had been to get the external leadership of the PLO to commit itself to negotiations on the basis of the UN 242 and 338 resolutions to secure Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. To be sure, Jordan hoped that the old-line pro-Hashemite leaders in the territories would play a major, if not predominant, role in representing the views of the people of the occupied territories; however, the most important consideration was to have their interest in ending the occupation influence the views of the PLO leadership towards negotiations. Since 1974, the official position of Arafat and the Fatah mainstream had been moving in this direction, but it was a fitfull and by no means irreversible movement. They were obsessed with the need to maintain as much organizational unity as possible on such a basic issue, given that they were already beset by foreign interference, distracted by personal rivalries and ossified by bureaucratic empire building (not to mention having to fend off the determined efforts of the Israelis and the United States to eliminate their role entirely). Arafat was thus forced to vacillate between the poles of the military and diplomatic options.

The popular nature of the intifadah gave it a legitimacy and an urgency which was impossible to ignore. It reinforced the views of the Israeli Labor politicians that the Likud's autonomy plan was impossible of realization. Alternatively, the "iron fist" occupation policies pursued by the Labor Minister of Defense, General Rabin, has resulted in a crackdown on all nationalist and pro-PLO activities that had made the resultant explosion all the more violent and its leadership all the more obscure. The attempt to foster a pro-Hashemite leadership in the territories had proven to be an illusion and wishful thinking. While the old, established pro-PLO leadership was being suppressed, exiled or imprisoned a whole new generation of youthful and much more militant leaders were nurtured--often within Israeli jails. In the long run, the intifadah reinforced the Labor viewpoint that negotiations for territorial concessions were the only possible solution, although only after the violence of the intifadah had been contained. Of course, the Labor leaders still hoped that King Husayn would either be authorized by the Palestinians or be confident enough of his strength to be able to negotiate with Israel. Failing that possibility, which soon became more and more remote, they hoped that a new intifadah leadership would develop its own negotiating position independent of the PLO. On the other hand, the hard-line policy of Sharon and his allies became even more prominent on the opposite side of the Israeli political spectrum. Various definitions of autonomy had one common denominator, and that was that the Palestinian people were essentially inert, while the essence of the intifadah was popular activity. The bankruptcy of autonomy solutions was masked

by the existence of the National Unity government, which had adopted this policy as their lowest common denominator on the occupied territories.

Jordan's Palestinian policy in response to the intifadah can be understood as an attempt to support the focus on the occupied territories. Clearly, the segment of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation were defining their interests in an unmistakable fashion..to put an end to Israeli occupation. Their means of expression was through militant mass action posing a political challenge to the occupation authorities. One of the most remarkable aspects of the intifadah was the avoidance of military confrontation and the almost universally respected ban on the use of firearms. The intifadah posed a problem for the PLO as well as the Israelis; how was the PLO going to help achieve the objective of the end of the occupation when the people on the ground were daily risking their freedom and their lives? It had been King Husyan's consistent view, emerging as the Arab consensus after the Fez Arab Summit in 1982 and reinforced as recently as the Amman Arab Summit of November 1987, that this could be achieved on the basis of negotiations through the UN 242 and 338 resolutions leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state linked to Jordan on the West Bank and Gaza strip. This position had been endorsed as well by the PLO external leadership under Arafat.

However, the PLO had been unable to implement this view in coordination with Jordan in 1985 and 1986, at least in King Husayn's estimation. But if the hitherto "silent majority" of the occupied territories were to add their views to the pragmatic

tendencies of the PLO, the PLO might be irrevocably committed to negotiations for territorial compromise and formal recognition of Israel. It had been the objective of Jordanian policy since the breakdown of the Amman Accords in early 1986 to bring this "silent majority" into the equation to influence the PLO's leadership. Now the occupied territories were speaking and they were agreeing with King Husayn's assessment. He might have wished that they would have spoken through pro-Hashemite spokesmen, but the vital consideration was that their voices should be heard and heeded by the PLO's external leadership. Perhaps the Palestinians would never accept the best of advice from King Husayn or from the old-guard pro-Hashemite elite of the West Bank, but they could hardly ignore the demands of the entire population of the occupied territories, especially when these demands were accompanied by militant defiance of Israeli authority. This was the opportunity created by the intifadah for a decisive alignment of Palestinian and Jordanian interests. If Jordan, the occupied territories and the PLO worked in concert for a negotiated settlement, it would be impossible for the Israelis or their American backers to ignore them.

The focus on the interests of the occupied territories could not help but affect the Jordanians of Palestinian origin on the East Bank as well. The development of Palestinian nationalism on the territory of Palestine was of prime importance to the existence of the Hashemite kingdom. The PLO's maximalist demands has always emphasized that the primary loyalty of the entire Palestinian people, including those in Jordan, should be to the cause of Palestine. This view, particularly associated with George

Habbash, held that the road to Jerusalem lay through Amman. The Hashemite state, even after its loss of the West Bank in 1967, was still a prime oppressor of the Palestinian people. They held that the Hashemites and the Zionists had a coordinated policy of suppressing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. However, if Palestinian national rights could be obtained through negotiation with Israel in the occupied territories of historic Palestine, the focal point of Palestinian politics would surely be on that territory and people and not on the Jordanian-Palestinians of the East Bank. To be sure, eventually an independent Palestinian state might form an attractive alternative for the Jordanian-Palestinians, but this was a much more remote danger than the almost inevitable outcome of the dominant trend in Israeli politics towards driving the remaining Palestinians from the land of Palestine and turning the East Bank into the Palestinian state. Thus, the territorial emphasis of the intifadah on the occupied territories served to emphasize the territorial separateness of the East Bank and its population, which might in turn serve to reinforce the feelings among the Jordanian-Palestinians that Jordan was their real home.

The serious immediate danger to the Hashemites from the intifadah stemmed not from its goal, but rather from its popular and emotional character. The daily spectacle of ordinary people confronting the armed might of the enemy brought home to all Arabs, particularly those of Palestinian origin, the reality of their struggle for freedom. This had been noted in the popular response to the siege of Beirut in 1982. There was the danger

that an aroused public opinion would be frustrated by the inaction of Arab regimes, and what Arab regime was more vulnerable to these frustrations than the Hasemite kingdom? It not only had a majority of citizens of Palestinian origin, but it claimed sovereignty over the territory where these confrontations were taking place. Leaving aside the national nature of the intifadah, its fundamental demand was for free and representative government to give people control over their own lives. Although the Hashemite regime was by no means the most repressive of Arab governments, the fact remained that political parties had been banned since 1957, the last national non-partisan elections had been held in 1967, and martial law had been enforced since the 1967 War. In practice, the Hashemite state was almost as unrepresentative as the Israeli occupation and perhaps even more repressive on a day-to-day basis.

The dilemma posed by the intifadah to King Husayn was clear. Its overt political message regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict was a welcome one; it brought an authentic, powerful and perhaps decisive Palestinian voice down on the side of pragmatism. It would be difficult if not impossible for the PLO's external leadership to ignore it. Once the PLO did accept this message, it would in turn begin to affect the policies of the United States and the internal politics of Israel. At the very least, the ascendancy of the Zionist right wing and its dangerous policies for the future of Jordan would be checked. At best, a settlement involving substantial territorial withdrawals might be concluded. Simultaneously, however, the symbolic message of the intifadah posed a challenge to all Arab regimes, but particularly to the

Hashemites. This was the message that the people were demanding political control over their own lives. If this broader message spread beyond the borders of occupied Palestine to the East Bank, it would have revolutionary implications for the Hashemite regime.

King Husayn's solution to this dilemma turned out to be a dual one. Internationally, it was to encourage the pragmatic voice of the intifadah within Palestinian politics. Internally, it was to contain, limit and guide the symbolic impact of the intifadah within the Jordanian political system.

One can identify several specific lines of action within Jordan's broad policy of supporting the intifadah internationally while limiting its effects internally:

1. To insure that the radicalism of the intifadah's populism did not spread to the East Bank, where it could pose two distinct dangers to Jordan. First, it could lead to open defiance of the authority of the government, and second, it could lead to direct actions to aid the struggle of the intifadah. Such actions would inevitably lead to Israeli retaliation, regardless of the Jordanian government's lack of involvement.

2. To reopen cooperation with the Arafat-led PLO leadership to encourage the pragmatic tendencies of both the intifadah and of Arafat. These could lead to significant breakthroughs on both the international and Israeli political fronts. They also had the advantage of countering those elements in the intifadah, both secular and Islamic, who favored a much more radical policy for the intifadah.

3. To realize fundamental changes in Jordanian politics towards democratization. If the intifadah were to fail, or if it dragged on indefinitely, the frustrations of the Palestinians would be taken out on the easier target of Arab regimes. Radical Zionist policies in Israel would gain renewed vigor and focus on the need for Jordan to serve as the Palestinian state. If the intifadah succeeded in obtaining an end to occupation, then the question would arise of a confederation with Jordan, for this was the official policy of the PLO, Jordan and the United States. In the past, King Husayn had promoted such a union because he felt confident in his ability to dominate it. It would be Jordan that provided the key to Israeli withdrawal and the terms of the union or confederation with Palestine would, in fact, have to be guaranteed by both Israel and the United States. However, if such a confederation were to be accomplished through the combined efforts of the intifadah and the PLO, Jordan would be the junior partner. In that case, its authoritarian regime would not appear attractive when compared to a successful, popular and representative Palestinian regime. Whether to join in such a confederation or to compete with a neighboring democratic Palestinian state, the Hashemite state needed a more representative form of government.

B. Containment of the Intifadah

Jordan's policy of isolating itself from the spread of the intifadah to its territory began in the first weeks of the uprising and has continued unabated until today. In a larger sense, the entire course of Jordanian policy towards the Palestin-

Palestinians in this period, including cooperation with the external leadership of the PLO, the ending of Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank and the democratization of the Jordanian political system has been aimed at the containment of the intifadah through alignment with the objectives of the Palestinians. However, a number of policies have been directed more specifically to contain the security risks of the intifadah in the narrower sense. We can distinguish several aspects of these security dangers and corresponding policy responses. First, there are the direct terrorist attacks against Jordanian targets aimed at the destabilization of the Jordanian political system. Second, there are the broader-based incidents in the nature of demonstrations and riots, perhaps instigated by agitators, but involving more popular participation by Palestinian groups--particularly refugees and students. Finally, there are armed attacks from Jordan across the cease-fire lines with Israel, ostensibly to aid the intifadah but more likely aimed at the destabilization of Jordan by provoking Israeli retaliation.

In the first months of the intifadah between 50 and 60 Palestinian security risks, mainly associated with the PFLP, and including PFLP central committee member Hamdi Mattar, were detained by Jordanian security authorities and some 70 more were reported to have been expelled.² On January 24, 1988 the PFLP issued a statement in Beirut protesting the arrest of 33 of their members in Amman. The same day Jordanian prime minister Zaid -----

2. David Clark, "Government View of Intifadah Described, " The Israeli Economist, February 1989, pp. 7-8, as reported in JPRS, 28 April 1989 (OUO), p. 11.

al-Rifai announced in parliament that 23 members of the PFLP had been detained along with a document from PFLP headquarters in Damascus with instructions for them to organize demonstrations to shake "the Jordanian agent regime" and to create "a revolutionary atmosphere". Press reports noted that some 150 demonstrators chanting "Revolution until victory" had staged a protest march in Amman, which was quickly broken up by security forces with several more arrests.³

By April, however, security challenges from the intifadah went beyond the stage of demonstrations and pre-emptive arrests. Car bombs were exploded in Amman and its suburbs, one in the parking structure of the Amman municipality. Statements claiming responsibility for these were made in Beirut by the "Black September" organization: "The explosions resulted in the burning of a nine story building which intelligence organs use as an operation room to plan their filthy operations against our kinfolk's revolution in Palestine and against the sons and strugglers of our Arab, Jordanian-Palestinian people in Jordan."⁴ One newspaper columnist in Amman immediately charged this explosion to Zionist terrorists and linked it to the assassination of Abu Jihad in Tunis. This view was not taken by the responsible authorities, Interior Minister Raja'i al-Dajani said that those responsible were known but that investigations would continue

3. Ishan A. Hijazi, "Palestinians Held in Jordanian Capital," The New York Times, January 25, 1988.

4. "Black September on Amman Car Bomb," An-Nahar (Beirut), 18 April 1988, p. 8, as reported in FBIS, 19 January 1988, p. 41.

until the actual perpetrators were found. He added that these explosions were aimed at influencing the policy of the Jordanian government...as in the 1950s and 1960s, but in fact merely aided the enemy:

"I believe that the perpetrators are hostile to the Arab Nation and to the Jordanian pan-Arab approach. Such acts do not serve the cause, but serve World Zionism directly and indirectly, trying to make the region agitated and uneasy and therefore ripe for the taking."⁵

A year later, a new group calling itself "The Generation of Arab Anger" issued a statement in Beirut claiming responsibility for the July, 1989, bombings in Saudi Arabia and announcing its decision to "liquidate" both King Husayn and Yasir Arafat as "agents of Israel", and warning the Saudi royal family to review its calculations lest it suffer the same fate.⁶

Suppression of demonstrations at refugee camps in Jordan were reported periodically. According to the pro-PLO newspaper Al-Fajr (Jerusalem), large demonstrations at the Al-Buggah and Al-Husayn refugee camps in Amman were suppressed in February 1988.⁷ The clandestine "Al Quds Palestinian Arab Radio" (broadcasting from Syrian-occupied Lebanon) claimed that large-scale

5. "Interior Minister Examines Security Apparatus After Bombings," interview in Al-Watan (Kuwait), 20 June 1988, p. 18, as reported by JPRS, 3 August 1988, p. 25.

6. "AFP: Group Threatens King Husayn, 'Arafat," as reported by FBIS, 17 August 1989, p. 26.

7. "Jordanian Suppression Revealed," Al-Fajr (Jerusalem), 11 February 1988, p. 1, as reported by FBIS, 12 February 1988, p. 38.

demonstrations in solidarity with Palestinian Land Day were held in the Amman camps in March 1988.⁸ Part of the Jordanian response was reported by Israeli sources to include warnings to youths that further arrests for participation in demonstrations, rock-throwing, etc., would include a 500 dinar fine on their families.⁹ Although the Jordanian-Palestinians as a whole were conspicuously quiet in both the anti-regime riots of April, 1989 and the elections in November 1989, it seemed as if the relaxation of the security forces later in that year contributed to unprecedented large scale demonstrations and incidents marking the second anniversary of the intifadah in December. A thousand demonstrators from Al-Buqqah camp, many of them masked, blocked the main Amman-Damascus highway, burning tires and shouting slogans against the new government of Mudar Badran as well as in support of the intifadah. Leaflets were distributed in the name of a new organization calling itself "The Unified Leadership of the Uprising in Jordan," an obvious copying of the name of the intifadah leadership in Palestine. This organization was said to be backed by both the Syrian-based radical Palestinian groups and Islamic fundamentalists.¹⁰ Whatever may have been the role of Islamic elements, the demonstrations were particularly praised by

8. "Mammoth Marches in Amman Camps on Land Day," as reported in FBIS, 31 March 1988, p. 34.

9. "Dan Avidan, "Jordan Takes Steps to Curb Spread of 'Uprising'," Al Hamishmar (Tel Aviv), 15 July 1988, p. 4, as reported in FBIS, 19 July 1988, p. 41.

10. "More Than 1,000 Demonstrate at Camp," Radio Jerusalem (Arabic), 4 December 1989, as reported in FBIS, 11 December 1989, p. 37.

Radio Teheran's Arabic service in their "Behind the News" feature on 13 December 1989 as an example of a new trend in the intifadah towards greater awareness and participation in the intifadah throughout the Islamic world. This trend revealed "the deep gulf between Arab masses and their reactionary regimes over what concerns the Palestinian issue."¹¹

The potential scope for the escalation of popular demonstrations was most clearly seen not in the violent demonstrations outside of refugee camps, but perhaps more significantly in the heart of Amman on the second anniversary of the intifadah. These were largely a more spontaneous and peaceful outcome of a "Week of Solidarity With the Intifadah" organized by the Professional Associations of Amman. Over several days a series of demonstrations of groups ranging from several hundreds to 12,000 chanted pro-intifadah, pro-PLO and anti-Israel and anti-United States slogans. Many of these demonstrations spilled over from official events, and included such slogans as "Palestine and Jordan, one people, not two."¹² Although some demonstrators wished to go to the American embassy to burn an American flag, they backed down when confronted by security forces, as well as being dissuaded by prominent Palestinian leaders, including 'As'ad 'Abd-al Rahman, a member of the PNC and Faris al-Nabulsi, a member of parliament.¹³ The potential for further

11. "Behind the News," Tehran Radio (Arabic), 13 December 1989, as reported in FBIS (South Asia), 20 December 1989, pp. 54-5.

12. "Amman March Gathers 12,000," Jordan Times (Amman), 13 December 1989, p. 3, as reported in FBIS, 13 December 1989, p. 36.

13. Ibid.

escalation of instability in the new atmosphere of freedom of expression was further emphasized in riots at Yarmuk University in Irbid between Palestinian-Jordanians and native "East Bank" Jordanian students. The latter objected to what they considered to be "anti-Jordanian" slogans and attacked a Palestinian cultural heritage exhibit displayed at the university in honor of the intifadah anniversary.¹⁴

Direct armed attacks on Israeli-held territory included some organized by Palestinian groups from Lebanon and others which, seemingly, had an Islamic motivation. Arrests were announced in October 1989 of twelve PFLP members for their involvement in the firing of Katyusha rockets at the occupied territories from Jordan. In an attack in early January 1990 in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Fatah, forces of the "Fatah-Uprising" (the Syrian-backed dissidents of Abu Musa) announced several attacks on Israeli-held territory through Jordan. They also claimed that they were aided by machine-gun fire from "nationalist soldiers in the Jordanian army", fire which allowed their forces to return to safety. Involvement by Jordanian forces was also claimed by Israeli sources, but it was also reported that Jordanian forces in the area had been rein-

14. "PFLP Official Reportedly Hiding, Not Arrested," Al Quds al-Arabi (London), 20 October 1989, p. 1, as reproted in FBIS, 24 October 1989, p. 31.

forced to set up lookout posts and road blocks to prevent further infiltrations and to search for those responsible.¹⁵

Marwan al-Qasim, the Jordanian deputy prime minister and foreign minister, declared that a number of these incidents were "unprovoked shooting at Jordanian territory...to distract attention from its (Israel's) internal pressures in other areas."¹⁶ However, another Jordanian soldier who crossed to the occupied territories where he was killed by Israeli forces was said to have left behind a message that he had gone to join the Jihad.¹⁷ Prime Minister Badran downplayed these incidents, stating that there were only ten shooting from Jordan's side. However, he added that "Jordan is determined to control the cease fire line. The world at large knows this."¹⁸

Most important, of course, was the reaction of Israel. Despite some pointed references from Defense Minister Rabin that Jordan would be judged not only by its intentions but by the results of its intentions, Rabin also noted that half of the Jordanian army were Palestinians or of Palestinian descent.¹⁹

15. "Amman Beefs Up Forces," Radio Jerusalem (Hebrew), 7 January 1990, as reported in FBIS, 8 January 1990, p. 21.

16. Faysal al-Shubal, "Foreign Minister Comments," Swat al-Arabi (Amman), 7 January 1990, p. 1, as reported in FBIS, 8 January 1990, p. 25.

17. Randah Habib, "Missing Conscript Was On 'Jihad' for Palestine," Radio Monte Carlo (Paris), 8 January 1990, as reported in FBIS, 9 January 1990, p. 35.

18. Ibid.

19. "Jordan to be Judged by 'Outcome' of Intentions," Radio Jerusalem (Hebrew), 8 January 1990, as reported in FBIS, 8 January 1990, p. 22.

Overall, therefore, there seemed to be a certain restraint in Israeli reactions, realizing that these operations were aimed as much at destabilizing the Hashemite regime as in giving aid to the intifadah. The officer most directly concerned, Major General Yitzhaq Mordekhay, commander of the Israeli Central Command, stated that he knew that the Jordanians are making every effort to keep the border quiet.²⁰ It was probably fortunate for Jordan that the National Unity government and the position of Yitzhak Rabin as defense minister was available for Jordan in restraining Israel's traditional policy of massive retaliation. In a larger sense as well, as noted by newspaper columnist Pinhas 'Inbari of Al Hamishmar (Tel Aviv), the destabilization of Jordan through the intifadah would most likely not result in the establishment of an alternative Palestinian government, but rather in a radical "Khomeyniite Islam", which would be unacceptable to either Syria or Iraq...resulting in armed clashes between Israeli and Arab armies on the territory of Jordan.²¹

C. Resumption of Cooperation With the PLO

The initial movement towards the resumption of cooperation and coordination between Jordan and the PLO was tentative. Both sides, it seemed, were still in the process of assessing the intifadah's leadership and direction. From the Jordanian side,

20. "IDF General on Jordanian Border Incidents," Radio Jerusalem (Hebrew), 5 January 1990, p. 29.

21. Pinhas 'Inbari, "Jordan's Stability Clear Israeli Interest," Al Hamishmar (Tel Aviv), 13 December 1989, p. 8, as reported in FBIS, 21 December 1989, p. 25.

one of the first public assessments of the intifadah was made by King Husayn in his address to the graduating class of the Command and Staff College on December 16, 1987, barely a week after the start of the uprising. Here, he emphasized his criticism of the Israelis for their failure to recognize the consequences of their outmoded concepts of occupation and colonialism:

"Has it not realized the meaning of the consecutive uprisings by the Arab people under occupation in Gaza, Hebron, Jerusalem, Ramalah, Nabulus, Golan, and in every camp and city in the occupied territories? Brutality, repression, deportation, and collective punishment are ineffective weapons and tools and cannot undermine the will of freedom which is deep-rooted and growing in the minds and hands of the Palestinian Arab people under occupation."²²

The monarch, however, did not identify the PLO as the leader of this movement. His terms for the resumption of political dialogue with the PLO remained those proposed nearly two years before, i.e., that they would resume from where they were broken off and not from the beginning. This was emphasized by the spontaneous nature of the intifadah and the fact that "the citizens in the occupied territories themselves have assumed the task of resisting occupation. This is something new." He hoped that the PLO leadership would now recognize the need to resume dialogue with Jordan..."from the point where we left off.. Jordan would like the PLO to be invited to the proposed international conference

22. "King Husayn Addresses Graduate Officers," Amman Domestic in Arabic, 16 December 1987, as reported in FBIS, 17 December 1987, p. 35.

for peace in the Middle East...If the PLO goes to this gathering, it must accept UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, renounce violence, and declare its readiness to discuss every aspect of the Palestine problem."²³

Dialogue was in fact resumed through a visit of a high-level PLO delegation, headed by Executive Committee member Mahmud Abbas, to Amman in late January, 1988. Another member of the delegation told Paris Radio Monte Carlo that the PLO side had not changed its own views over the past two years regarding coordination with Jordan. They based their actions on the Palestinian people's full right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state..."in line with the spirit of the uprising and the importance of using it politically."²⁴ There were some positive aspects to the discussions. Both sides emphasized that they agreed to support the intifadah along the lines that had been decided to at the Arab foreign minister's conference in Tunis earlier that month, but both sides noted that the discussions had been "frank".

In his Amman press conference following the discussions, the delegation spokesman for the PLO, Executive Committee member 'Abdullah Hurani, characterized the discussions as "extremely frank", and went on to state..."We have not come to Amman either to discuss the reactivation of the Jordanian-Palestinian agree-

23. "King Husayn on Dialogue with PLO, 'Uprising'," Amman Television in Arabic, 28 January 1988, as reported in FBIS, 19 January 1988, p. 46.

24. "Al Hurani Comments," Paris Radio Monte Carlo, 29 January 1988, as reported in FBIS, 29 January 1988, p. 46.

ment or to discuss the idea of concluding a new Jordanian-Palestinian agreement."²⁵ Instead, the discussions had been based on the need to exploit the new developments created by the intifadah. These had already had an international impact through worldwide publicity that had resulted in new Security Council resolutions that had been concurred in by the United States. These referred to "the Palestinian people" and to "occupied Palestinian and Arab territories", including Jerusalem. Although the PLO wanted to participate in an international peace conference, it continued to reject the UN 242 Resolution"

"We have not discussed the issue of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation (to the peace conference), as the international conference was not seriously discussed by the superpowers. Jordanian-Palestinian relations had not been good and it was impossible to resolve them in a few days of discussions..Frankly, the talks did not start 'from the phase that has been reached' it is said, as there are new developments represented by the Amman summit resolutions as well as those issued by the Arab ministerial council in Tunis."²⁶

An even more detailed account of the discussions and continuing differences between Jordan and the PLO was provided from PLO

25. "More on News Conference," WAKH (Manama), 30 January 1988, as reported FBIS, 1 January 1988, p. 56.

26. Ibid.

sources in an article in Al-Qabas (Kuwait).²⁷ The Amman talks were there characterized as the longest and most important held since the suspension of the dialogue between Jordan and the PLO in January 1986. The basic decision reached was to continue the dialogue towards achieving joint cooperation and action, but no decision was reached on "the form of participation for action in the coming stage." At the final session of the Amman meetings Mahumd Abbas had stated that the PLO would stand on its right to an independent delegation to a peace conference even though it agreed with Jordan that this would lead Israel and the United States not to attend. Therefore, in the PLO's view there was a need to change political stands, and it asked Jordan to help them do so. The PLO held that the UN 242 Resolution was not sacrosanct; it could be amended and the changed international atmosphere after the intifadah could be used to help achieve this amendment. Prime Minister al-Rifai, however, said that Jordan and the Arab countries had accepted UN 242 and it was not possible to amend it. Jordan hoped that this could be done but one had to deal with realities rather than with hopes.²⁸

Jordan's official spokesmen continued to emphasize their views that there were no fundamental differences with the PLO. The issue Palestinian representation in an international peace conference was not a fundamental issue, but "an Arab issue and a technicality", according to Information Minister Hani al-

27. Raken al-Majali, "Joint PLO Talks Focus on Cooperation, Action," Al-Qabas (Kuwait), 1 February 1988, p. 21, as reported in FBIS, 5 February 1988, p. 35.

28. Ibid., pp. 35-6.

Khasawinah. Jordan was not in competition with the PLO for the right to represent the Palestinian people.²⁹ Both sides were in favor of an international conference but Jordan saw a need "to return to the spirit" of the Jordan-PLO accord of February 1985.

Talks between Jordan and the PLO were resumed in mid-February, as Jordan reported its conversations with American Assistant Secretary of State Murphy to Mahmud Abbas. Neither side (Jordan or the PLO) had changed their basic stands on the peace process which had led to the suspension of their coordination in 1986. According to Marwan Dudin, the Minister for the Occupied Territories, the Amman Accord had not been officially abrogated by the PNC..."in essence the accord is still there".³⁰ The basis of Jordanian hesitancy in the resumption of coordination with the PLO was clearly indicated by Dudin in this same interview, and it was the fact that Jordan viewed that the nature of the intifadah leadership was still unclear:

"We do not have enough information to judge if there is indeed a unified command for the uprising and if there is such a thing we are not sure of its identity and whether it adheres to a fundamentalist religious trend, the PLO, or the Communist Party..for we receive leaflets signed by the

29. Salamah B. Ni'matt, "No Fundamental Differences With PLO," The Jordan Times (Amman), 9 February 1988, pp. 1,3, as reported in FBIS, 9 February 1988, p. 44.

30. Lamis K. Andoni, "Official' Position on Peace Visit Outlined," Jordan Times (Amman), 23 February 1988, pp. 1, 5, as reported in FBIS, 23 February 1988, p. 43.

Jihad, the Palestine Communist Party and the Unified Command among others".³¹

Jordan would be willing to talk to a new leadership, if it should emerge but it would not view it as a substitute for the PLO..."if such a leadership emerged it would find a place within the ranks of the PNC."³²

A coordinated Jordanian-PLO response to the demands of the intifadah seems to have taken a turn for the better with the visit to Amman by Hani al-Hasan, political adviser to Arafat and member of Fatah's central committee, at the end of February. Agreement was reached on a common approach to the initiative of Secretary of State Shultz to revive the peace process by the presentation of a list of detailed questions regarding the positions of the United States.³³ They agreed to continue their meetings and to discuss the American response following the visit of Secretary Shultz to Amman. It was clear that Jordan did not wish to be accused of having accepted Shultz's proposals advanced during a visit to Amman in early February, when it had given a non-committal answer...stating that Jordan felt that there were a certain positive aspects which merited further discussion.

Thus, when Shultz visited Amman again in early April he was presented with a list of six questions, prepared in consultation with the PLO, and asking for clarification of American views

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 44.

33. Rakan al-Majali "Senior Officials, PLO Discuss Shultz Visit," Al-Qabas Kuwait), 27 February 1988, pp. a and 21, as reported in FBIS, 1 March 1988, p. 39.

regarding "the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people", Palestinian self-determination and the interpretation of the UN 242 resolution's call for withdrawal from the occupied territories. When Shultz's airport press conference on his departure gave preliminary answers to these questions which included the fact that the United States continued its refusal to recognize the PLO, to accept self-determination or to have Israel withdraw to its 1967 borders, the conference was not broadcast nor was it reported directly in the Jordanian press.³⁴

A press conference by Prime Minister al-Rifai and Information Minister al-Khasawin had distributed the text of the Jordani-na-PLO questions presented to Mr. Shultz.³⁵ The prime minister then proceeded to explain each of them in detail. Three of the points related to Jordan's traditional views on the peace process: the fact that withdrawal included all the territories occupied in 1967, the mechanism for negotiations was through an international conference, as envisaged in UN 338 to reflect the full weight of the UN Security Council, and that this conference must not be merely ceremonial. The final point of the questions put to Mr. Shultz went to the heart of Jordan's negotiating posture and elaborated an issue which had never been fully addressed in the negotiations during the active phase of the 1985

34. Mahmud al-Sharif, "Shultz Plan," Provocative' Statements Viewed," Al-Dustur (Amman), 12 April 1988, p. 11, as reported in FBIS, 14 April 1988, pp. 40-41.

35. "Al-Mustaqbal Cities Al-Rifa'i on Shultz Tour," Al-Mustaqbal (Paris), 16 April 16, 1988, pp. 26-27, as reported in FBIS, 21 April 1988, pp. 39-40.

Jordanian-PLO accords. Now, al-Rifai fully endorsed the PLO's view. Jordan would attend an international conference in a joint delegation with the PLO if the parties agreed to this, but this did not mean that some Palestinian individuals could be included in a Jordanian delegation as representatives of the Palestinian people. Instead, it would mean that a joint delegation would have half of its members from the PLO and half from Jordan. An invitation to the conference would have to be addressed to the PLO executive committee. "When we talk about Palestinian representation we mean the PLO", according to al-Rifai.

In May two interviews by King Husayn, one to the West through AFP and another to the Arabs through a Kuwaiti newspaper elaborated on the evolution of Jordan's Palestine policy. When asked by the AFP if Jordan's stand on a PLO component in joint delegation meant an end to Jordan's claim to the West Bank, the monarch replied that there was no change, since the issue of Palestinian representation had been settled at the Rabat Summit of 1974: "Jordan cannot represent the Palestinians. Jordan has nothing to do with this issue."³⁶ Instead, it was obvious that the king's concern had shifted to the East Bank: "We are very concerned about remaining united here in Jordan. We want everyone, whether he is of Palestinian, Iraqi or Syrian origin to understand that all citizens are equal in their rights and duties."³⁷ According to the king, the instruments for the union

36. "King Husayn on Arab Force, Mideast Conference," PETRA-JNA, in Arabic (Amman), citing an AFP interview, as reported in FBIS, 11 May 1988, p. 38.

37. Ibid., p. 39.

of the two banks, including the parliament, had been intended as means to achieving the final goal of the implementation of Palestinian rights in a final settlement. In his interview with Al Qabas (Kuwait) he reviewed his version of the entire history of Hashemite involvement with Palestine. This he presented as a burden and a duty, to which Jordan had to response because of its views on Arab unity and the dangers of Zionism. Although he still held out his "United Kingdom" plan of 1972 as the ideal Jordanian-Palestinian relationship for the future, because it best represented the ideal of Arab unity, he claimed that Jordan adhered to the Rabat Summit's designation of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The important thing was for the Palestinian people to regain their land, then they could chose any form of relationship with Jordan that they wished...unity or an independent state.."we will bless their decision and support them with all our power."³⁸

In contrast to a number of analysts, he asserted that Jordan had nothing to fear itself from the intifadah. The intifadah had been a positive action in refuting Israel's claims that it could secure peace by seizing Arab territories. Although the intifadah was, perhaps, necessary, it could not by itself liberate Palestine. "Personally, I do not think that the uprising can liberate the land, but it may lead to a quick treatment of the problem.

38. "Al-Qabas Interviews King Huseyn on Arab Issues," - Al-Qabas (Kuwait) 11 May 1988, pp. 12-13, as reported in FBIS, mideast Conference, 13 May 1988, p. 22.

Otherwise, the collapse will continue and the consequences could be disastrous for everybody in the region".³⁹

The Jordanian message was beginning to get through to Israel. Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Labor Party's political committee that he considered that King Husayn had retreated from his previous positions by announcing that he could not assume responsibility for negotiating on behalf of the Palestinians.⁴⁰ Foreign Minister Peres hoped, even at this late date, that a deal could be struck with Jordan. He explained his concept that the Jordan river should remain Israel's security border but that Jordan should be responsible for heavily Arab populated territories: "If the Jordanians are responsible for Hebron, they will do things differently, and possibly even better."⁴¹ However, the usually well-informed Israeli journalists Uri Horowitz and Pinhas Inbari reported in mid-May that the decision had already been taken by Jordan to cancel all their commitments to the West Bank as part of its policy of recognizing the PLO as the sole representation of the Palestinians. This was made clear, they said, to the PLO representatives visiting Amman in May. This decision was attributed to a debate in the palace, where King

39. Ibid.

40. Sholmo Shitzky and Asher Shiloni, "Rabin Seeks 'Modus Vivendi' With Palestinians," Al-Hamishmar (Tel Aviv), 13 May 1988, p. 3, as reported by FBIS, 17 May 1988, p. 22.

41. "Peres Proposes Jordan River as Security Border," IDF Radio (Tel Aviv), 8 February 1988, as reported in FBIS, 9 February 1988, p. 34.

Husayn had come under pressure to disassociate himself from the West Bank due to unrest in Jordan.⁴²

Indications of a fundamental change in Jordanian policy continue to multiply. A routine statement of support for Jordanian policy and urging the PLO to bring about co-ordination with Jordan from West Bank leaders resident in Amman was banned at the last minute by Jordanian officials. The king, it was said, wanted to make it clear that he recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.⁴³ In a series of "fast breaking" meetings with provincial leaders during Ramadhan, King Husayn elaborated on his concepts of Jordanian-Palestinian relations and put particular emphasis on the unity of Jordan and the equality of all Jordanian citizens, regardless of origin with regard to their rights and duties.

At the extraordinary Arab Summit held in Algiers in early June King Husayn gave a detailed and frank explanation of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, the intifadah and the response of the Arab world in general and Jordan in particular to the intifadah. In what he termed the "second phase" of Jordanian-Palestinian relations, the phase since 1967, Jordan had only two aims: to support the steadfastness of the people under occupation and to reach a political settlement to recover the occupied territories. However, he admitted that the intertwining of these two goals

42. Uri Horowitz and Pinhas 'Inbari, "Jordan Ready to Cancel West Bank Commitments," Al-Hamishmar (Tel Aviv), 16 May 1988, as reported in FBIS, 17 May 1986, p. 24.

43. "Statement by West Bank Figures in Amman Banned," Paris Radio Monte Carlo, 21 May 1988, as reported in FBIS, 22 May 1988, p. 27.

gave rise to misunderstandings and charges that Jordan merely wished to exercise hegemony over a liberated Palestine:

"Why should we preserve the legality of our institutions on the West Bank?...Why do we not satisfy ourselves with a declaration of support for the PLO and its position, since our efforts are construed as competition and bring on ourselves misunderstandings and lack of confidence, with all the troubles and burdens they entail and which we could well do without?"⁴⁴

King Husayn answered his own question by reference to the "special and distinctive relationship", which was a natural development of geography, demography and history, and not a matter of choice. Ironically, he pointed out, Israel recognized this relationship and was continually trying to solve the Palestinian issue through Jordan and at the expense of both Jordan and Palestine.

Aware of Arab and Palestinian suspicions, King Husayn had offered in 1972, two years before the Rabat Summit decision on the PLO's exclusive representational role, a choice of three options to the Palestinians, one of which was complete independence, should the occupied territories be regained from Israel. In the most significant portion of his address, Husayn renewed this offer with an important addition. If the Arab Summit and the PLO wanted to make recognition of a Palestinian state a precondition to the holding of an international peace conference, "even if this does not lead to the convening of the conference," Jordan

44. "Husayn Addresses Summit," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, 8 June 1988, Text, as reported in FBIS, 9 June 1988, p. 11.

would agree to whatever the Arab brothers unanimously agreed to support.⁴⁵ Finally, he reminded the "Arab Brothers" that moral support was fine enough, but that Jordan, Syria and the Palestinians needed financial support as well. In fact, Jordan had received only half of the sums pledged to her at the Baghdad Arab Summit nine years before.

D. Disengagement from the West Bank

In July, hints of Jordan's decision on disengagement multiplied, and on July 28 it was officially announced that the Five Year Plan for the occupied territories was terminated. The statement from the cabinet said that this would "put an end to any attempt to suggest that Jordan's motives in supporting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people under occupation are suspect or conducive to promoting what has been referred to as a sharing of administrative responsibility in the occupied territory and are constraining and undercutting the role of the PLO."⁴⁶ Besides the PLO, senior army officers and Israeli Foreign Minister Peres has been warned in advance of the decision.

Finally, on 31 July, King Husayn addressed "the Arab Nation" to explain his decision, which reversed the course of Hashemite-Palestinian relations established by his forefathers and continued through his own reign. Although he denied that he had

45. Ibid.

46. "Council of Minister's Statement, Text," Amman Domestic Service in English, as reported in "Occupied Territories Development Plans Cancelled," FBIS, 28 July 1988, p. 24.

ever had any motive save to support the people and to liberate occupied Palestine, he admitted: "There is a unanimous conviction that the struggle for liberating the occupied Palestinian territory can be bolstered by disengaging the legal and administrative relationship between the two banks, then we must perform our duty and do what is required of us."⁴⁷ He continued, nevertheless, to emphasize that this decision concerned only the Palestinian territory and its people and most emphatically did not concern Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan:

"All of them have citizenship rights and commitments just like any other citizen regardless of his origin...Jordan is not the Palestinian state and the independent Palestineian state will be established on the occupied Palestinian territory after its liberation, God willing."⁴⁸

Similarly, Jordan continued to uphold its belief in Arab unity, as the merger of Arab groups on its soil into one Jordanian people testified. Neither did Jordanian renounce its pan-Arab duty towards the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Palestinian question. Aside from the fact that it was a confrontation state with the longest Arab border with Israel (including a Palestinian border of the West Bank and Gaza, if it were a state)..."No one outside of Palestine has ever had or will have connection with

47. "King Husayn Speaks on 'Separation' From West Bank," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, 31 May 1988, as reported in FBIS, 1 August 1988, p. 40.

48. Ibid.

Palestine or its cause that is stronger than the connection of Jordan or my family with it."⁴⁹

Although doubts continued to be expressed about the tactical or strategic nature of King Husayn's decision, evidence rapidly mounted that it was indeed final. Salary payments were stopped for some 21,000 on the West Bank and Gaza, with the exception of some 2,000 employees of the courts and religious establishments.⁵⁰ Perhaps an even more telling indication was the fact that the King sent messages to Hashemite supporters on the West Bank that he would not receive the traditional delegations pledging their loyalty and requesting him to reconsider his decision.⁵¹

A royal press conference in Amman, televised in English, on 7 August gave a more informal but elaborated explanation of the move to disengage. The monarch did not feel that Jordan's position on the peace process had been changed at all. It remained based on a comprehensive peace through the means of an international conference including PLO representatives. Although Israel had declared that it would accept a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation at a peace conference, this had obviously not led anywhere. He took great pains to elaborate on the theme that all citizens in Jordan were equal, regardless of their origins. At

49. Ibid., p. 41.

50. Joel Brinkley, "Jordan Will Stop Employee's Wages in the West Bank," The New York Times, 1 August 1988, p. 1.

51. Ori Nir and Aquiva Elder, "Jordan's Husayn Rjects West Bank Visitors," Ha'aretz (Tel Aviv), 3 August 1988, pp. 1, 6, as reported in FBIS, 3 August 1988, p. 22.

the same time, however, he refuted suggestions that Palestinians composed sixty per cent of the population, saying that they were less than forty per cent.⁵² Many Palestinians in the occupied territories hadn't looked on Jordan's motives correctly. "There were doubts and suspicions...it (Jordan) had been taken for granted by so many in this world as a whole."⁵³ When asked if he believed that the disengagement would cause the PLO to come up with a new and creative approach to peace, he admitted that this was a possibility:

"I hope that the pressure of events, particularly in the occupied territories and the responsibilities that we have chosen to give them will contribute to their ability to come up with the right answers to serve the Palestinian cause and to safeguard Palestinian rights."⁵⁴

Yet, it was clear that his overall attitude as reported by those present, was cool and distant towards the PLO. Their representatives in Jordan would be accorded the status of foreign delegations or embassies "so to speak", but with unaccustomed frankness, the King stated: "We have nothing to say to the PLO. We'll hear what they will have to say to us. And I am sure we will keep in touch in the future."⁵⁵ The New York Times reporter indicated that a notable coolness towards the PLO existed with -----

52. "King Husayn Hold's News Conference on West Bank," Amman TV in English, 7 August 1988, as reported in FBIS, 8 August 1988, p. 33.

53. Ibid., p. 35.

54. Ibid., p.36.

55. Ibid., p. 35.

the King's advisers as well. "They strongly hinted they had little faith in the ability of the PLO to do the job of negotiating an Israeli withdrawal or arriving at the creation of an independent Palestinian state."⁵⁶ However, King Husayn did reply that he would unhesitatingly recognize a Palestinian government immediately, should that be the decision of the PLO.

56. Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Hussein is Forsty on New PLO Role," The New York Times, 8 August 1988, p. 1.

BUILDING A NEW RELATIONSHIP

A. Introduction.

In less than two years following the disengagement of Jordan from the West Bank the fundamental bases of the Hashemite-Palestinian relationship have been changed. The disengagement was the first major political decision taken as a consequence of the intifadah and one of its most noteworthy successes. In effect, it removed one of the three traditional claimants to the sovereignty over the occupied territories, the Hashemites, and left the contest to the struggle between the Israelis and the PLO. It is easy, perhaps, to see with hindsight that the Hashemite claim was the weakest of the three, for it had neither the popular support of the PLO nor the physical presence of the Israelis. But real life international conflicts are rarely settled by a clear choice between absolute opposites, and the Jordanian claim had the advantage of being the prime choice of several important actors and the second choice of virtually everyone else.

Thus, there had much truth in King Husayn's often repeated lament that everyone took Jordan's role for granted in the Palestine conflict. Those parties who looked to some form of territorial compromise, but without a Palestinian state, such as the Israeli Labor Party and the United States, had assumed that Jordan would always be available to reassert its legal claims and pan-Arab ambitions in the occupied territories to provide the basis for an effective government following Israeli withdrawal.

Whether this return would be largely a Hashemite military occupation replacing an Israeli one (and probably being more effective in suppressing the PLO), or whether Jordan would be able to build on its traditional constituency by attracting the "silent majority" who, above all, wanted to be free of Israel's "iron fist" and creeping annexation, was a matter of indifference to outsiders...though certainly not to King Husayn. For the extreme right of Israeli politics, who utterly rejected any territorial compromise in "Eretz Israel," but were forced to acknowledge the problem of a million and a half Palestinians in "Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip," Jordan served a convenient function as well. It was, in their view, already the existing Palestinian state from the point of view of demography, although without a Palestinian government. It was thus an ideal repository for both the political ambitions of Palestinians for a national identity and a convenient dumping ground for the Palestinians of "Eretz Israel" who were unwilling to accept a permanent status of personal "autonomy," which was the best that the Likud and its allies were willing to offer them.

The PLO's view of the Hashemites was more complex. In part, this was inevitable since the PLO was a disparate and shaky coalition under the largely nominal leadership of Arafat at best, or at worst they were a series of conflicting factions engaged in a bloody struggle for power in which neither women nor children were spared, as in the "War of the Camps" in Lebanon. The PLO radicals, symbolized by George Habbash, had a view of Jordan that was largely parallel with that of the Israeli radical Zionists. They, too, viewed it as the Palestinian state and would get rid

of the Hashemites at the first opportunity. Of course, unlike the Israelis, they saw this as only the first step towards the regaining of first the West Bank and then of all Palestine to the Mediterranean Sea, using Jordan as their forward base. The mainstream PLO view symbolized by Arafat and most of the Fatah leadership, although not without challenge, had come to prevail as the official view of the PLO adopted at meetings of the Palestine National Council, particularly the 17th in Amman (1984) and the 18th in Algiers (1987).

Although the mainstream PLO might agree in their hearts that Jordan was part of the Palestinian nation and the Hashemites would have to go, they felt it wiser to keep quiet about this. In fact, they were so discreet as to be able to formulate an official view on the unity of the Palestinian state and Jordan that was acceptable to King Husayn...that they were a single people who would be joined in a confederation immediately after gaining independence. Since this was the basis for King Husayn's own claims and had been offered to the Palestinians as an option in 1972, he could scarcely object. Thus, for the Palestinian mainstream, Jordan had the vital role of offering a plausible, if difficult, opening for a political option leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state. Even the bravest and most dedicated Palestinian nationalist, and it would be difficult to challenge Arafat's credentials in these areas after the siege of Beirut (although many did challenge his wisdom, honesty and administrative ability) would be forced to admit that the "military option" appeared to be more and more ephemeral as the PLO

headquarters moved from Amman to Beirut to Tunis. A continued political option was a necessity for the PLO mainstream to maintain its credibility. It was part of the Arab consensus expressed at the Fez Summit in 1982 and the Amman Summit in 1987. They were dependent on this consensus for their recognition as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" conferred on them by the Arab Summit at Rabat in 1974, as well as for the major source of their financial support from the Arab Gulf states. Simultaneously, it was the preferred option of their major great power supporter, the Soviet Union, which wished to avoid another confrontation with the United States, as in 1973, or another defeat for their Arab ally as administered to Syria in 1982. Arafat realized that the only possible admission ticket to a political solution would have to be delivered from the Israeli Labor Party, through American mediation, to be picked up in the form of participation in a joint delegation with Amman.

For its part, the PLO held the bargaining chip of providing legitimation to King Husayn to take the lead in negotiating with Israel for something that he knew full well would be much less than the return to the 1967 borders. But the legitimacy of any exiled political organization is, historically, an unstable mandate. As exiles, they are dependent on the good will and self interest of their hosts. Lacking the practical responsibilities of governing or the restraints of electoral politics, they are notoriously subject to factionalism and the influence of demagogues. However unpopular the occupying power, it has the advantage of representing the status-quo with the administrative power to control living conditions. Obviously, any occupying power

will attempt to create a puppet leadership and there are always a few traitors available in any society. More importantly, however, is the fact that a high level of political mobilization is an unnatural condition. Even the most efficient and/or repressive of totalitarian governments have to spend a great deal of effort to achieve this, and they are dealing with their own people. Thus, far more important than the Quislings and Babrak Karmal's of the world for the occupying power is the political indifference of ordinary people who wish to get along with their daily lives with the least possible difficulty. As an American official observed regarding the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1986:

"You think that the occupation is so intolerable that the Palestinians will do anything possible to get rid of it. Though this might seem logical, in actuality the occupation doesn't effect most of the people to a great extent. They get along pretty well and are most interested in their own lives and private concerns. It isn't too difficult for the Israelis to administer either."¹

Following the war in Lebanon, as the external supports of the PLO's legitimacy fell away one-by-one (including the illusion of a credible military option) they were more dependent on being able to present a credible political option. It was obvious to

1. Interview with a State Department official, Washington 1986. One of the best descriptions of the response of populations to foreign occupation is that of John Lukacs, The Last European War, September 1939/December 1941 (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1976).

all that KING Husayn was dependent on the PLO, or possibly the Palestinians of the occupied territories could they be organized, for the legitimation of his political role as the spokesman (or co-spokesman) of the Palestinian people in negotiations with Israel.² It is less obvious but equally true that Yasir Arafat depended on King Husayn for the legitimation of his role in representing the occupied territories in the absence of a credible military option. There could be no political option without the role of KING Husayn. It was evident in the occupied territories after the King Husayn-Yasir Arafat agreement in Amman in February 1985 that the Palestinians of the West Bank were the major basis of support for the Hashemite-PLO alliance. Although the occupied territories rallied to the PLO after the suspension of the agreement a year later, it was clear that Arafat was anxious to present the split with the King as an unfortunate incident which did not cancel the resumption of the political co-option with Jordan.

To the extent that the Palestinians of the occupied territories felt that a political settlement was their best, or only, hope in ending Israeli occupation and the growing threat of annexation, they too felt that Jordan would always be available at some unknowable time in the future when a conjunction of PLO, Israeli, Arab and international politics would make negotiations possible. In the interim, however, the Jordanian role on the West Bank was encouraged by the occupation authorities. It helped to make life more tolerable and provided a window of -----

2. Interview, Professor Asher Susser, Ithaca, N. Y., 1987.

opportunity to the Arab world and beyond through education, employment, travel and emigration, all of which were dependent on a Jordanian passport. Jordan thus was a giant safety valve keeping the pressures of the occupation from building to intolerable levels.

The attitudes of the Jordanian-Palestinians of the East Bank, seemingly the most accessible to observation, were the most difficult to bring into focus. Politically and socially, these ranged from ministers and Royal Hashemite Court advisers to impoverished refugees living in camps as did their fathers before them. Here, there was none of the hyperactivity and debates of the PLO activists and intellectuals in the diaspora, which provided a wealth of information even if there were six different versions of each event. Neither were there the semi-open (as long as it did not lead to political organization or action) politics of the West Bank, which came to be symbolized in the East Jerusalem newspapers. Substantial information on elite politics of the West Bank was thus available, although the incident of the survey published by Al Fajr (Jerusalem) in 1986 demonstrated that the Israelis viewed with deep suspicion any survey of popular opinion that might be construed as a substitute election. In Jordan, however, there was virtually no political activity or expression on the Palestinian issue, particularly from Jordanian-Palestinians, except that sanctioned or inspired by the authorities.

Although general prosperity and an efficient security apparatus had kept most Jordanian-Palestinians quiet for the past

two decades, and those who disagreed were free to leave, it was also clear that Palestine remained a sensitive domestic issue. As King Husayn constantly pointed out in his references to the closeness of the Jordanian and Palestinian people to justify his interest in the fate of Palestine, this was also a two-way street. If he knew that the Palestinians of the West Bank were not really his people, he could hardly repudiate the Jordanian-Palestinians of the East Bank or he would have very little left to govern. The more than forty years of integration of the two societies, especially in the past two decades, had made it impossible for Jordan to function as a modern state without the participation of Jordanians of Palestinian origin. In fact, with the exception of the military, the Palestinians were the modern Jordanian state.

Yet, with them the personalized, patriarchal, religious and traditional political style of the Hashemites, so effective in dealing with the people of the East Bank, could not be applied. Although the rival appeal of the PLO parties in 1970 to represent the Jordanian-Palestinians in Jordan has clearly failed, and not merely because of the superior fire-power of the Jordanian military, the legitimacy of the Hashemites to rule over the East Bank depended, at least in part, on their role in the ultimate realization of the goal of liberating the people of the Palestinian homeland from Zionist occupation. If the Hashemites were to prove indifferent or irrelevant to this goal, their legitimacy for the Jordanian-Palestinians would be reduced to a purely pragmatic appeal as the relatively effective and not too oppressive de facto regime. But without the commitment to

Palestine, there would be no moral or emotional core of loyalty based upon the shared hopes, fears and ambitions of either the Palestinian or Arab nation...or, in other words, no legitimacy. In addition, as with the occupied territories themselves, Jordan's practical role in the occupied territories and as an outlet for their inhabitants made it easier for the Jordanian-Palestinians to maintain their ties with their brethren under occupation.

King Husayn's disengagement decision was a necessary preliminary for the reformulation of a new Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, forcing both sides to look at their relationship in the absence of the assumptions that had guided each since 1967. We will examine how these new relations have developed with each of the three segments of the Palestinian people relevant to Jordan--the PLO, the occupied territories and the Jordanian-Palestinians of the Hashemite Kingdom itself. Developments in each area have taken some novel twists in less than two years, and the over-all results are still less than firm, but to date they have tended to confirm the wisdom of King Husayn's decision of July 1988.

B. Hashemite-PLO Relations

Although the king certainly had hoped that the disengagement decision would finally lead Arafat to come off of the fence and adopt his own personal preference for a political solution, most of the King's advisors seriously doubted if this could be done. The fact that the PLO did move in this direction with unaccus-

tomed alacrity to adopt a political position on the recognition of Israel's right to exist, support for UN 242 and 338 in isolation as well as in conjunction with all UN resolutions on the Palestine question, and the renunciation of terrorism, was a pleasant and favorable outcome. The king might well have regretted that this decision had not come sooner, such as in January 1986 when he had American assurance that such a policy would lead to an international conference including representatives of the PLO. However, it was clear that the new conditions due to the pressure of the intifadah for a political solution and the ending of the assumption that Jordan would always be available to represent the political option while the PLO pursued its struggle for internal unity had forced Arafat to embrace the political option. When this was followed by the opening of a dialogue with American officials in Tunis, the wisdom of the disengagement decision was all the more obvious.

On the one hand, this removed the burden of Jordan having to be the spokesman for the Palestinian political option. This role had been a prime source of Arab and Palestinian criticism over the years, as King Husayn had complained of in his speech to the emergency Algiers Arab Summit, and the intifadah had made this role even more onerous. Now, Jordan could no longer be accused of undermining Palestinian national goals in the self-interests of the Hashemites. On the other hand, the assumption of this role by the PLO, although not fully acknowledged by the United States and completely repudiated by the Israelis, served to keep the political option open as a rational goal for the sacrifices of the intifadah.

The basis of the new relationship between Jordan and the PLO was a broad mutual agreement on the fundamental issues facing both states in the light of the intifadah. The PLO's reply to Jordan's strategic decision to disengage from the West Bank was their own definition of their national interests in their declaration of independence issued by the PNC on 15 November 1988. This defines their interests and aspirations in both geographical and political terms. Geographically, these were the entire territory of mandate Palestine occupied by Israel as a result of the 1967 war and politically it was complete sovereignty and independence for the Palestinian people within this territory. Although a clause in the declaration reaffirmed the goal of a confederation with Jordan, this was clearly subordinated to the goal of the attainment of independence...it spoke of "future relations between the states of Palestine and Jordan."³ The Palestinian national aims were to be achieved, as President Arafat's later clarifications in Europe made clear, through negotiations on the basis of the UN 242 and 338 resolutions. These statements were accepted by the United States as satisfying the "Kissinger requirements" for the opening of political talks with the PLO.

The PLO's strategic decision was, primarily, intended to reassure Israel and the United States that the demands of the Palestinian National Charter for all of mandate Palestine had been canceled. Simultaneously, however, they served to reassure -----

3. "Palestine National Council, Political Resolutions, Excerpts," Palestine Perspectives, November/December 1988, p. 7.

Jordan that the PLO had no designs upon Jordan based on the demographic strength of the Jordanian-Palestinians. The PLO has always been suspicious that the Hashemites, as well as the Israelis, had wanted to end any PLO role and (at least the Labor Party) engage in a new partition of Palestine. But ever since 1970, despite periodic attempts at coordination between King Husayn and Yasir Arafat, Jordan has harbored suspicions that the PLO wanted to eliminate the Hashemite state as the preliminary to the regaining of Palestine. Now, even the officials of the Popular Front and Democratic Front, who had always led the anti-Hashemite wing of the PLO, appeared in Amman and were officially received by the prime minister. This emphasized that the entire PLO, not just its moderate wing, shared the view of a common danger to both Jordan and Palestine. PFLP member of the Political Bureau (and member of the PLO Executive Committee) Mustafa al-Zibri spoke of Palestinian-Jordanian relations during his first visit to Jordan in twenty years:

"...We think the Israeli threats against Jordan are also threats against the Palestinian's national cause. Therefore, we do not stand idle or neutral about these threats. On the contrary, we feel we are in the same battle in the face of the Israeli schemes, especially when they talk about the alternative homeland. The issue of the alternative homeland will not only harm Jordan and the Jordanian people, but it will primarily harm the Palestine question. There-

fore, we are as interested as Jordan in resisting this Israeli proposal."4

On its part, Jordan had to pay little for this endorsement, for Prime Minister Badran claimed that the matter of opening PFLP offices in Jordan had not been discussed in his meetings with the PFLP delegation..."and it will not be discussed in the future."5

Although the militant PLO's threats to Jordanian security had been downplayed for some time, the intifadah clearly posed the danger that they could be renewed, as did their actions in the spring of 1988 when the Jordanian government claimed to have captured instructions from the PFLP in Damascus to their supporters in Jordan to destabilize the Jordanian regime. But the clarification of Palestinian territorial demands brought about by the intifadah made it clear the target was no longer Jordan. The evaluation of Arafat adviser and Fatah Central Committee member Hani al-Hasan could not be improved upon from the Jordanian point of view:

"...by the alternative homeland Israel does not mean giving Jordan to the PLO, but dividing Jordan among the Jordanians to the south, the Palestinians to the North, and the Israe-

4. "PFLP's Al-Zibri on Israel, Arab Relations," Al-Quds Al-'Arabi (London), 3 May 1990, p. 5, as reported in FBIS, 7 May 1990, p. 5.

5. "Premier Badran Discusses Political Problem," Al-Majallah (London), 15 May 1990, pp. 18-20, as reported in FBIS, 11 May 1990, p. 17.

lis in al-Salt heights and the Jordan rift area. Israel regards itself as a partner in Jordan."⁶

There was a fundamental agreement between Jordan and the PLO as to the goal of a political settlement on the territory of Palestine and the rejection of any solution that Jordan was part of the Palestine state. This was fundamental to Jordan's perceptions of the dangers to its own existence heightened by the intifadah--at the same time that the intifadah provided a possible opening for their solution by involving the PLO in the political process. These dangers stemmed from either the Palestinian side or the Israeli side, should either decide to take over the Jordanian state. The danger from the Palestinians, which had been latent since 1970, had been aroused by the renewed political activism of the intifadah, which had spilled over into Jordan. Fortunately, this was offset to some extent by the renewed focus of PLO efforts on the territory of occupied Palestine. However, the removal of the illusion in Israeli and American circles that the status quo could go on forever with little cost, or the underlying problem of the Palestinians could be solved through Likud's political option of Jordan as the Palestinian state was shattered as well by the intifadah. This renewed the dangers posed from the Israeli right wing to the existence of Jordan.

But aside from the immediate issues of Jordanian-PLO relations there were the questions of the long-term future relations should a Palestinian state actually be established.

6. "'Arafat Political Adviser Calls for Arab Front," Al-Anba (Kuwait), 28 March 1990, p. 29, as reported in FBIS, 3 April 1990, p. 11.

Salah Khalaf, the number two man in the PLO and Fatah, still spoke of them as virtually agreed upon and inevitable in the context of an immediate confederation, or even union:

"I say that on the day immediately following the establishment of the Palestinian state, we will begin unity with Jordan. I am not concerned what kind of unity this may be, because we are one people and have the same history. You cannot make distinctions between a Jordanian and a Palestinian...We indeed constitute one people...When the Palestinian state and unity is established, this problem will not exist. The Jordanian will be a Palestinian and the Palestinian a Jordanian. The problem is solved as far as we are concerned."⁷

It was not, however, so clear to King Husayn. Rather, the whole confederation question would now have to be reexamined in the light of the new conditions. He even went so far as to attribute this idea to the PLO, and to forget his often repeated reference to his own United Arab Kingdom plan of 1972 with his preferred option to the Palestinians of a confederation:

"Regarding this idea of a confederation, the PLO often has presented this idea, which it is trying to achieve in the light of its distinguished and special relationship with Jordan. However, a confederation can only be established between two independent states or entities...We will not

7. "Khalaf on U.S., Hamas, Jordanian Relations," Al-Ra'y (Amman), 8 December 1989, pp. 8, 15, as reported in FBIS, 15 December 1989, p. 4.

take the initiative in presenting any idea. But we are ready to discuss with the PLO any opinion it views in the future."⁸

Clearly, the new situation required rethinking the confederation issue. In the past, the confederation had been part of the political package to secure PLO participation in a political option. In reality, it was a reassurance demanded by the United States for the Israeli Labor Party that whatever territory was returned to the Palestinians and whatever the Palestinian entity there was called, it would in fact be dominated by the Hashemites. Now, the intifadah and the acceptance of the UN 242 resolution by the PLO had opened a direct link for the PLO to the peace process, even if it was still mediated by the Americans. This removed the issue of confederation to part of the future, the post-independence condition instead of a requirement for the peace process to begin.

It could be expected that Hashemite-PLO relations would improve following the two strategic decisions of King Husayn in July 1988 to end Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank and the PLOs decision in November 1988 to opt for an independent state on Palestinian soil to be obtained through political means. It could also be anticipated that the reopening of cordial relations between Jordan and the PLO would lead to very important practical measures necessary to sustain the intifadah and, not unimportantly, to help Arafat maintain his leadership. What was -----

8. "King Interviewed on Peace Process, Elections," Al-Dustur (Amman), 21 October 1989, pp. 1, 17, citing an interview with the BBC of 20 October, as reported in FBIS, 25 October 1989, p. 31.

truly startling, however, was the fact that the PLO was able to give Jordan important and perhaps decisive aid when it was faced with a challenge to domestic stability from the hitherto quiet native Jordanians of the south in April 1989. At the same time, the Jordanians were able to aid the PLO in its relations with the militant Islamic groups in the occupied territories, which remained independent of the official "Unified National Leadership" controlled by the PLO. In the end, these events only went to demonstrate the closeness of the various segments of the Palestinian people and the fact that, even in the absence of formal ties of confederation, it was impossible to separate the effects of actions in one sphere from the others.

C. The Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza.

Although the end of Jordanian sovereignty claims seemingly settled the issue of the West Bank as a focus of Jordanian-Palestinian conflict or cooperation, the fact remained that Jordan had a very strong interest in the outcome of the struggle there and still had influence of its own. The essence of the struggle for both the PLO and Jordan was to keep the intifadah in being as a challenge to Israel and the United States that could not be ignored, while at the same time keep it under control to prevent it from being taken-over by more militant elements who rejected any political settlement. The traditional "radicals" of the PLO...the PELP and DFLP...were now included in the Unified National Leadership and in the PLO executive committee. Along with the participation of the Palestine Communist Party, this

strengthened the secularist political wing of the intifadah. The radicals of the PFLP-GC of Ahmad Jibril and the Fatah rebels of Abu Musa had virtually no support on the ground inside the occupied territories. The major struggle to control the direction of the intifadah was now between the PLO supporters and the Islamic groups of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad. These latter groups rejected any political settlement and instead called for the establishment of an Islamic state in all of Palestine. In such a struggle, Jordan still had an important role to play. First, there were the old pro-Hashemite stalwarts. Although former Gaza mayor Al-Shawwa had died, Elias Frayj remained in office in Bethlehem. Frayj, an Israeli analyst aptly remarked, ... "has many merits, but it is impossible to speak of him as representing any trend within the leadership of the intifadah." Yet, he was included by President Mubarak in a list of suggested Palestinians to begin talks with the Israelis regarding elections.⁹ At the same time (October 1989) Mubarak suggested that, while he supported an independent Palestinian state, it might be best... "for the stability of the region"... if it were to enter into a confederation with Jordan.¹⁰ Significantly, this call came immediately after a meeting in Sa'na of the leaders of the Arab Cooperation Council (of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and Yemen, founded in February 1989), and could only have been made with the consent, if not the inspiration, of King Husayn.

9. Pinhas "Inbari, "Proposed Palestinian Delegates Contrasted," Al Hamishmar (Tel Aviv), 12 December 1989, p. 8, as reported in FBIS, 12 January 1990, p. 10.

10. Ibid.

At the same time, the Israeli Labor Party continued to press its traditional ties to the Hashemites through Frayj, who went to Amman following talks with a Labor minister in the Unity Government. While Shamir was suggesting that Jordan should be the Palestinian state, Labor was considering the creation of a tripartite confederation of Jordan, Israel and an autonomous Palestine. In facing threats from Likud as well as Islamic ideas of an Islamic Palestine, King Husayn has been most sensitive to emphasize the religious diversity of both Jordan and Palestine. This has included repeated references in speeches and interviews to the "document of 'Umar," referring to the second caliph's guarantee of religious freedom to Jerusalem following the Islamic conquest of 638 A.D. Talks with the Christian, and pro-Hashemite, Major Frayj, emphasized the shared view of both Jordan and the PLO that the Palestine issue was part of an Arab nationalist, secular struggle rather than a religious Jihad.

Yet, King Husayn's position as an Islamic ruler and a descendent of the Prophet, as well as long-standing Hashemite policy to compromise with the Muslim Brotherhood in both the West Bank and the East Bank, continued to give him influence with Hamas. Israeli reports noted that these contracts were being intensified in order to secure the participation of Hamas in any elections that might be held for a Palestinian peace delegation.¹¹

11. "Jordan Stepping Up Contacts With Hamas on Talks," Jerusalem Television, in Arabic, 21 December 1989, as reported in FBIS, 28 December 1989, p. 30.

Jordan's relationship with the Islamic element in the occupied territories became even more complex, but potentially even more important following the reopening of parliamentary politics as a result of the elections of November 1989. The strongest single political force to emerge in these elections was the Muslim Brotherhood. According to Israeli reports, two of the newly elected MPs, Layth Shubaylath and Yusuf al-'Azm, had helped to finance arms for the Islamic underground of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin in Gaza as early as 1983.¹² Still, Faysal al-Husayni, the most prominent spokesman of the intifadah and a staunch Arafat supporter, preferred to downplay the Islamic influence, saying that they would get about 18 seats in a 120 member parliament in a free election. He also felt that there were "moderate" elements within Hamas as well.¹³

D. The Jordanian-Palestinians.

Certainly, the most unexpected outcome of the decision of disengagement has been the impact of the decision in Jordan itself. As we have remarked, this portion of the Palestinian people are the least considered in discussions of Jordan's Palestine policy, yet in all probability they are the most significant for the Hashemites. In one sense, King Husayn was fully aware that his decision would have serious internal repercussions

12. "'Yehuda Litani,' Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood MPs Funded Arms," The Jerusalem Post, 13 November 1989, p. 1, as reported in FBIS, 14 November 1989, p. 47.

13. Avitar Inbal, "Al-Husayni Interviewed: Sees 'Possibility of War'," Davar Hashavu'a Supplement, 5 January 1990, pp. 4, 5, as reported by FBIS, p. 31.

within Jordan. Indeed, one of the earliest indicators of such a decision were a series of meetings during Ramadan, 1988, in which King Husayn personally explained the need for unity between all inhabitants of Jordan...regardless of their country of origin. The problem was seen as a dual one. On the one hand, the Jordanian-Palestinians might be tempted to give their allegiance to the PLO, now that they had replaced the Hashemites as the hope for a political option to regain Palestine. On the other hand, there were many East Bank Jordanians who were tired of the entire Palestine issue and suspicious of their ability to disrupt Jordan's stability, prosperity and unity. The king wished to strike a balance to assure the Jordanian-Palestinians that they were welcomed as loyal citizens with equal rights and duties, and to capitalize on the fact that there was no longer any basis for conflict between Jordan and the PLO for the right to represent the Palestinians of the occupied territories.

It was necessary, as well, to reorganize the entire constitutional basis of the kingdom, for this was based on the union of the two banks of the Jordan. King Husayn's political acumen, which came to serve him well in less than a year, was to see that the reorganization of Jordanian society and politics could best be accomplished through the reopening of normal electoral politics, which had largely been suspended since the suppression of political parties more than thirty years before. Obviously, this affected Jordan most directly, but it had an equal affect on the intifadah as well. Both King Husayn and the Palestinians realized that they would be in a better position to

criticize Israel's denial of political rights to Palestinians if they were to show that they could grant these democratic rights in Jordan. Ultimately, a political settlement with Israel would depend, at least in part, in convincing Israeli public opinion that a Palestinian state, or entity, could be governed rationally and responsibly. The Labor Party has always hoped that Jordan would be able to accomplish this, although it was not too worried about the democratic nature of Jordan's control. But the intifadah had demonstrated, above all, that any stable government in the occupied territories would have to be based on political participation instead of force. A successful transformation to democracy in Jordan would serve to demonstrate that the Palestinians (who were, in fact, the majority in Jordan) could be trusted to act responsibly following Israeli withdrawal. If the Palestinians could cooperate with their traditional enemy, King Husayn, they could probably cooperate with their own elected leadership in Palestine. This demonstration role of Jordan's political liberalization was carefully noted by the leading pro-PLO newspaper in the occupied territories:

"Jordan's move to democracy dispels Israel's claim that it is the only 'democracy' in the Middle East. It will also help block Israeli hardliners' efforts to pass off the Jordan as Palestine' nation. The hardliners were hoping that instability and ethnic differences in Jordan would create trouble for the present regime and lead some disgruntled Palestinian to carry out a coup to overthrow the monarch, thus turning the country into real anarchy and chaos...Democracy in Jordan is bound to reflect

positively .paon the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and eventually in an independent Palestinian state."14

The threatened descent into chaos in Jordan came, against all expectations, not from the Jordanian-Palestinians, but rather from the native Jordanians of the south--the group always considered to be the backbone of the Hashemite regime. The impetus of the rioting in Ma'an and Kerak in April 1989 came from a combination of economic austerity, heightened by price rises in basic commodities including gasoline imposed as part of an IMF economic package, along with charges of corruption in the government of Zaid al-Rifai.¹⁵ Embarrassingly, they happened at the precise moment that King Husayn was in the White House for his first official visit with President Bush. The Regent, Crown Prince Hassan, acted swiftly to go to the disturbed area and the king cut short his visit to return. In the short run, al-Rifai, although a life-long friend of the monarch and the son of a former prime minister himself, was summarily dismissed to be replaced by the former chief of staff and head of the Royal Hashemite Court, Sharif bin Shaker, a distance relative of the King. The arrested rioters were soon released from jail and Jordan moved quickly to secure immediate foreign loans and deposits to shore-up the economy. In the long term, a more realistic economic policy was introduced by a highly respected economist

14. "Al-Fajr Views 'Jordan's Move to Democracy'," Al-Fajr (Jerusalem), 25 December 1989, p. 4, as reported in FBIS, 29 December 1989, p. 33.

15. Robert Saltoff, "Jordan Looks Inward," Current History, February 1990, pp. 57-60, p. 33.

and banker. Most importantly, however, was the decision not only to go ahead with scheduled elections, but to actually liberalize their conditions even further. The restrictions on political parties in force for 32 years were dropped one by one in a de facto fashion as the electoral date approached, and freedom of the press was restored. The elections held in November 1989 resulted in a stunning victory for the Islamist trend, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, but the new Chamber of Deputies, including most of the Islamists, voted to confirm the government of Mudar Badran, a former prime minister as well as a former security chief. Two other trends came to be represented in the Chamber, the government supporters and the secularist "Democratic" trend, who could be identified with the former Arab nationalist opposition. Together, these elements held a majority. Although the Muslim Brotherhood did enter into negotiations to join the government, its demands for cabinet posts were considered excessive. In any case, the Islamic element has not voted consistently as a bloc against the government.

The electoral results have two important effects for Jordan's Palestine policy. On the one hand, the Muslim Brotherhood's official policy is fully in accord with that of their brethren in the occupied territories. It totally rejects any compromise with Israel and demands the entire land of Palestine as a sacred Islamic land, which can be regained only through a jihad.

"The land of Palestine is an Islamic land and it belongs to the Muslims until the end of the world. It is forbidden to

concede one inch, regardless of any justification and pressures...

All UN resolutions--particularly Resolutions 181, 242 and 338--which call for any concession of the Islamic land in Palestine are, by the stand of right and justice and from an Islamic perspective, are rejected and considered null and void...

"The international conference is an enormous trick and a cloak under which Arab regimes might concede large parts of the land of Palestine, approve conciliation with the Zionist enemy and the consequent normalization, and allow the enemies of God to have power in the Muslims' land...

"Supporting the blessed intifadah and entrenching and developing it so that it can constitute the beginning of the road toward launching the continuous jihad to liberate the entire Palestinian soil...

"Frontline states must be considered forward positions from which to liberate Palestine. Their populations must be mobilized for jihad in preparation for the hour of attack and liberation..."¹⁶

The second important outcome of the elections was to confirm the non-interference policy of the PLO in the internal politics of Jordan...a policy which worked to strengthen the Hashemite position at the same time it emphasized their wish to avoid giving anyone the impression that Jordan was the Palestinian

16. "Islamic Movement Outlines Election Program," Al-Ra'y (Amman), 25 October 1989, p. 16 (Text), as reported in FBIS, 27 October 1989, pp. 24-5.

state. Although this might seem to be a temporary advantage for the liberation of Palestine, the Palestinian organizations were virtually unanimous in their view that this would only encourage Israel and the United States to carry out the Likud policy of solving the Palestine problem in Jordan instead of in Palestine. It is safe to say that this policy was confirmed, rather than inaugurated, in the elections, for the PLO and the Jordanian-Palestinians acted swiftly in April to stay out of the anti-regime riots. Whether this position was from direct orders from the PLO or a spontaneous action is debatable. Robert Saltoff believes that it was spontaneous.¹⁷ However, a Palestinian newspaper published in Jerusalem claimed that official instructions were sent by the PLO once it was clear that the issues in the riots were internal Jordanian ones. It gave a number of arguments in support of this policy:

1. Instability in Jordan would divert attention from the Palestinian intifadah.

2. King Husayn's relations with the PLO had greatly improved.

3. Jordan was playing a prominent role in the current Palestinian political effort.

4. Disturbances over prices were an internal matter, and as in similar disturbances in Tunisia and Algeria, the PLO did not interfere in the domestic affairs of an Arab state.

17. Saltoff, op. cit., p. 60.

5. The Palestinians might be drawn into actions by hostile forces.¹⁸

It also stated that the PLO's assurances of non-interference had been conveyed to King Husayn. Whether the PLO's role was formal or the result of a local decision of its supporters in Jordan, King Husayn made a public statement of thanks immediately following his return to Jordan in April:

"We want to record the fact that the Palestinian brothers played a positive role and were completely distanced from the riots. The PLO role is appreciated because of its pacifying nature..."¹⁹

The Jordanian-Palestinian position on the elections was clarified in an interview given by Ibrahim Bakr, a member of the PNC, former high official (twenty years ago) of the PLO and former chairman of the Jordanian Lawyer's Union. Mr. Bakr was characterized by his interviewer as a prominent and influential Palestinian figure in Jordan who did not belong to any PLO faction. He stated that "the Palestinian circle connected with the PLO" had been eager to have the new Chamber of Deputies have a "Trans-Jordanian" character, so as to refute Israel's statements that Jordan was the Palestinian state. Thus, "an intrinsic, voluntary, spontaneous, and unanimous decision was made to exclude any Palestinian deported from the occupied territories

18. Palestinian-Jordanian Relations Going Through a New Stage," Al-Bayadir Al-Siyasi (Jerusalem), 6 May 1989, p. 16, as reported by JPRS, 13 July 1989, pp. 5-6.

19. Ahmad al-Jarallah, "King Husayn Interviewed on 'Disturbances'," Amman Domestic Service in Arabic, 27 April 1989, as reported by FBIS, 28 April 1989, p. 40.

since 1967 (which he claimed numbered some 3,000), any Palestinian who is a member of the PNC, and any Palestinian who has held or now holds an executive position from the PLO from running for election."²⁰ Even those parties of the PLO that had formed local Jordanian parties for the election did so because they had been part of the old Arab Nationalist Movement, and they nominated only East Bank candidates. The PLO organizations went even further than their agreement, and did not support even those candidates that it felt were most sympathetic to its cause. An exception to prove the rule, in Mr. Bakr's eyes, was the successful campaign of a young Circassian, Mansur Sayf-ed-din Mansur, in Amman. Although not a prominent member of the PLO and a native of the East Bank, he had been a fedayeen fighter imprisoned for the hijacking of an El Al plane and had fought in Lebanon as a volunteer in 1982. Although relatively young (39) and unknown, he defeated prominent Circassians and overcame Islamist opposition to win on the strength of his record as a fighter for Palestine.²¹

In the end, both the elder statesman lawyer and the young fighter agreed that the success of Jordan's democratic experiment would enhance the chances of success of the PLO's political

20. "Relations With PLO, Hamas Described," Al-Yawm Al-Sabi' (Paris), 15 January 1990, pp. 10-12, as reported in JPRS, 21 February 1990, p. 52.

21. Ibid., loc. cit., Stephen Hubbell, "Jordan Votes the Islamic Ticket," The Nation, Vol 249, No. 22 (December 25, 1989), p. 786.

policy. Ibrahim Bakr's view of the role of the PLO and the views of the Jordanian-Palestinians as complementary:

Jordan is strongly attached to the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian cause does not feel alienated in Jordan. This does not mean that he abandons Palestine. I am convinced that the democratic climate prevailing in Jordan at present will allow the PLO presence to be comfortable and politically and informationally effective...

I believe that the PLO will find numerous facilities in Jordan under the canopy of the new situation, especially in connection with its political and information activity and with its efforts to strengthen contact with the occupied Palestinian territories. This motivates the PLO to be eager to protect and strengthen Jordan's security because a successful democratic experiment is the greatest support for the PLO generally and for the intifadah in particular."²²

Deputy Murad also believed that Jordan's experiment must succeed for the sake of Jordan and for Palestine. "If there is no democracy in Jordan, the situation will explode."²³ In another interview he supported the disengagement decision, but said that steps would have to be taken to alleviate some suffering these caused for the Palestinian people. "The establishment of the state of Palestine is a major step to complete liberation. Those who make daily sacrifices in the occupied territories, under the leader-

22. "Relations With PLO, Hamas Described," Al-Yawm Al-Sabi' (Paris), op. cit., p. 54.

23. Hubbell, loc. cit.

ship of the PLO, have the right to determine their own future without having anyone bargain for them."²⁴

The political situation in early 1990 had clarified a good deal of the old ambiguities of Jordanian-Palestinian relations. Although not likely to be overthrown by an internal force, King Husayn's Palestine policy is now influenced by the internal political situation in Jordan to an extent unknown since 1967. The clearest internal danger to his policies stems from the position of the Muslim Brotherhood, for their electoral program constituted an open attack on both the PLO and King Husayn's policies. Jordan will do its utmost to support the PLO's political option and the intifadah, and the PLO will do its best to support the stability of Jordan. Both fear that the failure of either the intifadah to secure political gains or of Jordanian democracy's failure to stabilize politics in Jordan would lead only to chaos in both Jordan and Palestine. The Islamists might win the first round in the contest over the pieces, but Israel would win the second and proceed to eliminate the Islamists, the PLO and Jordan.

It is by no means assured that the combined efforts of the PLO and Jordan will succeed in their efforts at stabilization. The rise of religious fundamentalist feelings both within the Zionist movement and within the intifadah and Jordan could well succeed in undermining the moderates now in charge of the intifadah, the PLO and Jordan, as they have already undermined the

24. Sa'd al-Silawi, "Deputy Murad Lists Parliamentary Priorities," Sawt Al-Sha'b (Amman), 19 November 1989, p. 3, as reported by FBIS, 22 November 1989, p. 22.

moderates who recently shared the National Unity Government in Israel.

In the current situation, it is clear that Jordan cannot and would not take a lead in any new political effort at an Arab-Israeli settlement. With the suspension of talks between the PLO and the United States in June, 1990, there may well be renewed pressures from both Israel and the United States for some kind of reopening of the Jordanian role, if not the "Jordanian option." In fact, although the distrust between Yasir Arafat and King Husayn has dissipated to a great extent, the issue of a political role for Jordan has been fundamentally changed by the intifadah and the rise of the Islamist movement in the Palestinian arena. As long as the cause of Palestine was a secular, political and nationalist movement a compromise as to who represented Palestine, as well as a compromise on the borders of Palestine, was barely feasible. Although Arafat and Husayn were old enemies, they had something of the fraternity of boxers who had fought each other many times. But to the overwhelmingly youthful Palestinian population who are the backbone of the intifadah, King Husayn is a remote figure from another planet, and it is difficult enough for Arafat to assert his populist authority himself, without thinking what would happen to this authority should he delegate even more of it to King Husayn.

On the other hand, the long range prospects for the stability of a settlement, should one be reached, have perhaps improved. Should an Israeli government seek a compromise with the intifadah, the common effort of the PLO, the intifadah and Jordan could

lead to a possible confederation of Israel, a Palestinian entity on its way to statehood, and Jordan...or perhaps an even broader regional grouping involving Egypt as well. As Jordan becomes more democratic, the long-term threat posed by the union of a traditional monarchy with a hyperactive, politicized Palestinian population becomes less of an obstacle. After a peace settlement, such an arrangement could lead to a stable peace. Why would Israel opt for such a solution? At least some in Israel and among its foreign supporters might well find this preferable to the most likely alternative, e.g., the renewal of an even bloodier conflict over Palestine. If the history of this conflict for its first twenty years was a war between governments, and the next twenty years added the war between a militant nationalist movement to the contest, the war of the 90s would be inherited by absolutist fanatics on both sides, each confident that God has promised them the same land. This would have intolerable consequences for all, including Israelis, Palestinians and Jordanians...at not the least for the United States.

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